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Teachers and Prophets:
Literature and Spirit in the Making of
The Secondary Teacher of English
Volume 1

by

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for the degree of PhD in the
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August 1990

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'..Teachers and prophets have strange after-histories..'

Lytton Strachey: Eminent Victorians

'..When a man sits down to write a history - though it be but the history of Jack Hickathrift or Tom Thumb, he knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hindrances he is to meet with in his way, - or what a dance he may be led, by one excursion or another, before all is over. Could a historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule, - straight forward; - for instance from Rome all the way to Loreto, without ever turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left - he might venture to foretell you to an hour when he should get to his journey's end; - but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: For if he is a man of the least spirit he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually soliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly; he will more-over have various

Accounts to reconcile:

Anecdotes to pick up:

Inscriptions to make out:

Stories to weave in:

Traditions to sift:

Personages to call upon:

Panegyrics to paste up at this door:

Pasquinades at that: -

All which both the man and his mule are exempt from..'

Sterne: The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Vol.1 Ch.14

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Mr HM Paterson, who supervised the thesis, and Mr ML McKenzie for their advice, support and encouragement in the writing of this thesis. My thanks, too, to Mrs C Tallen, who typed the manuscript.

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SUMMARY

The teacher of English in the secondary school may be understood in terms of his spiritual orientation with regard to the literature he studies. As a result of his adoption and endorsement, usually at school age, of the values apparently implicit in that literature, he finds himself at odds with the outlook and philosophy of 'ordinary' people. Through the higher education of the teacher an attempt, seemingly successful, is made to 'correct' his outlook on life so that it becomes consistent with that of the people he will serve professionally. This attempt at 'correction' is in fact only partially successful and leaves the teacher, in spiritual terms, without a philosophy - he can neither embrace completely the 'correct' view of life nor surrender entirely that represented in literature. Thus, his condition aggravated by the part he plays in the purposes of the school, he becomes in a spirit of both hostility and resignation the 'archetypal' teacher: unsympathetic, uninspiring and alienated from those he is set to teach.

PREFACE

The secondary teacher of English is estranged, not just from teaching and literature, but from the world and himself. He exists in a kind of philosophic limbo, preoccupied with and confused by the ultimate issues of living, and is indirectly encouraged thereby to become all that we conventionally expect, or indeed allow, of the teacher of English. These claims are advanced by the adoption of an unusual methodology, and are justified in unorthodox terms, developing previous notions of the teacher of English and redescribing the teaching of literature in Universities.

In this preface I shall first consider the teacher as viewed today by Margaret Mathieson, Fred Inglis and Peter Abbs, then examine, through the ideas of Newman, Leavis and Bergonzi, the place and teaching of literature in the Universities, concluding with a description and defence of the methodology mooted above.

* * *

Margaret Mathieson, in her influential The Preachers of Culture, provides us with our first account of present day teachers of English. Through a telling examination of what she sees as their professional confusions, Mathieson recognises and attempts to account for the teacher's contemporary malaise. She begins historically:

'The content and tone of discussion about the aims of English teaching during the past 150 years testify to its supporters' view that the subject is of special importance in pupils' lives. Prescriptive writing insists upon the need for exceptionally gifted people to take on this responsibility and, on occasions, it goes so far as to claim that neglect of drama, or creativity, or literature will stultify pupils' personal development or precipitate cultural catastrophe.'(1)

The teaching of English, then, imposes upon the teacher educational and cultural burdens which have grown progressively greater. Responsibility falls heavily on the shoulders of the contemporary teacher, and it is here, according to Mathieson, that his confusions begin. Attempting to fulfil the duties described above, teachers of English find themselves in a political maelstrom. Radical - or progressive - elements are challenging the value of their attempt to promote the 'special importance' of English,

'..carrying their attack upon elitism into the curriculum.. [persistently criticizing] its specialist, academic,

authoritarian elements.. because of the perceived irrelevance of this education to the lives of working-class children.'(2)

Other voices, too, are heard. Some traditionalists reject the idea that the English curriculum is identified with middle-class values and culture, and insist that there is, after all, no imposition of 'foreign' perspectives upon working-class children: literature, in its concerns, is the mouthpiece of no class group. Others, however, agree with the radicals or progressives that many such children should not follow the orthodox curriculum, but have it interpreted in terms of the features of their own environment. But this again may be seen as divisive, and finally elitist in intention. Because of pressures such as these, says Mathieson,

'...it appears that many conscientious English teachers see themselves faced with strongly expressed [and differing] views about their role.. While these differences may present some teachers of English with an exciting and stimulating challenge, it must be allowed that they could confuse a great many.'(3)

Thus, teachers of English have much expected of them, and have, indirectly, many political decisions to make. These circumstances have also an effect on the student teacher of English, who

'..enters the schools with equivalently high expectations, and given the problems.. these are likely to be severely tested.. [and] can lead to disappointment and cynicism.'(4)

Mathieson's argument is an impressive one. It stresses the peculiar difficulties of the teacher's role, difficulties which have much to do with the obligation to transmit a subject possessed of a potency bound to affect its recipients, although the nature of its influence is a hotly-contested issue. Reading Mathieson, it becomes clear that in considering the situation of the teacher of English we may take little for granted, other than the fact that the teacher, dealing with and in literature, carries an unusual burden, and shoulders considerable moral and political responsibility. In one important respect, however, Mathieson's account is tantalizing rather than satisfactory. Since literature possesses the ability to influence and determine the outlook of pupils, what is its impact upon those who are, ostensibly, the masters of it? And if literature has a telling influence on the teacher, what is the nature of that influence, and what bearing has it on what Mathieson describes as the teacher's professional malaise? Perhaps, as well as examining his professional concerns, we may learn a great deal by looking for the teacher's spiritual biography.

If prescriptive writing on the teaching of English has, as Mathieson notes, regularly insisted that the teacher of English has a key role in promoting his pupils' personal development and, at the same time, avoiding 'cultural catastrophe', then the work of Fred Inglis is surely a response to that imperative. In The Englishness of English Teaching, Inglis presents the world today as a frightful place which the teacher of English, his outlook galvanized by exposure to literature's humane values, may help set to rights. 'Mostly,' says Inglis

'..we simply do not recognise in any conscious way that the phases we live in have only a brutalized identity, and we do not know what spiritual impoverishment our loveless, placeless homes make for.'(5)

The modern world - and here one is reminded of the initially idealistic philosophy of Kurt Hahn - is a wasteland. We have no firm values, no real aesthetic, nothing to remind us of the potentialities of our humanity. Inglis advocates a rejection of all that tends towards 'mechanization', in every sense of that word. It is a cause of material greed and is the philosophy that informs our lifeless, standardized ideas of education. We cannot return to a pre-industrial situation, but we can arouse

'...a militancy against all that is hateful in contemporaneity and for a brave access of energy to build on those things which are worth the holding.'(6)

Hence, to live more abundantly we have to return to the humane values ostensibly in operation prior to the 'mechanization' of life. In the classroom, sensitivity, responsiveness and 'self-expression' must be fostered in order that we may recover our humanity. The teacher of English, his sensibilities heightened by literature, is prepared for this remedial role. Inglis' faith in the power of literature to help set things right is directly expressed in his Ideology and the Imagination:

'The great strength of English literary studies has been and in part remains the building of a vocabulary in whose terms it is possible to speak of life and death. Once can speak of them in this way with dignity and conviction. The seriousness and truth of this speech must be retained... if we are to recover some living community in intellectual life..'(7)

Inglis' teacher of English is, as Mathieson has it, a 'complex, intense, introspective personality who in the classroom has the charismatic power to stimulate his pupils' sincere self-expression'(8). He needs, in Inglis' words,

'...a peculiar responsiveness to his children - almost, one is tempted to say, the responsiveness of the artist to his art - and they need to know this in

him. It is a matter of knowing the right sort of magic to lead one child from a closed alley of experience into a new one.'(9)

In Inglis' account, then, setting aside the sometimes fraught issue of what constitutes pupils' 'self-expression', we discover the nature of the impact literature has on the teacher. It literally reconstructs the world in humane terms which, outside its purview, are falling quickly into obsolescence. The desideratum in Mathieson's account is supplied, and credibly, forming a major contribution to any consideration of the spiritual condition of the teacher of English. Yet one feels some unease, not about Inglis' claims that literature is the inspiration for humane insights and enthusiasms, but as to whether the literary perspective he so splendidly outlines has in fact the power to overcome the 'mechanized' outlook which ostensibly forms its opposition. Is the world's outlook so otiose as Inglis suggests? What if the world is not so decadent as he imagines, and is possessed of a coherent, articulated spiritual Weltanschauung capable of resisting the imprecations of the literary outlook? Might not the literary crusader find his faith in his cause faltering, himself becoming, through the conflict between literature and life, less the cultural saviour of Inglis' vision and more a man of sorrows who cannot save himself? And if

the world, unregenerate, has the ability to confound the teacher, as seems possible when we look, in vain, for many teachers conforming obviously to Inglis' salutary pattern, from what source does that ability spring?

Whatever our conclusion on this point, Peter Abbs' vision of the teacher of English, like Inglis', both profitably extends our knowledge of the teacher's relationship with literature and raises further questions concerning his relationship with the world.

Abbs, in his brilliant Jeremiad upon the unimaginative classroom teaching of English English for Diversity, conjures up a teacher of English more potent even than Inglis'. His is not to reassert the values of an older - and better - order, but to explore the depths of the individual in order to create a new and undreamt-of consciousness. While Inglis envisages a recovery, the teacher of English in Abbs' vision has his eye firmly on discovery. According to Abbs, the teacher ought to be a lover of literature for its eleutherian properties: the ultimate possibilities of man are addressed therein. One can only be amazed, notes Abbs,

'...at how calmly the established order has tucked literature under its great wing.. literature has become a respectable and specialized activity of our society. What happened to its

subversive energy? For indeed, literature does possess revolutionary power. More often than not, literature is highly disturbing in its content, often having as its declared aim the systematic breaking down of any comfortable position. Great literature is an affirmation of madness in a sane world which has lost itself. And how is one to arrive at this divine madness? Only through a daring plunge into oneself.. It is the job of educators.. to provide for that descent.'(10)

The teacher of English, then, having made 'that descent' himself, sets to work to enable his pupils to do the same. This teacher, this seer, should require of and inspire in his pupils 'creativity' in the highest sense:

'..by [creativity] I mean.. that [which] is primarily expressive of the individual who [produces] it, and is effective in terms of its.. energy.. its penetration and freshness of perception. It is opposed to formal work: work which aims solely at getting the externals.. right.. the impetus.. should be beyond externals, in the heart and imagination of the child..'(11)

Abbs' vision of the teacher of English, while perhaps drawing too sharp a distinction between 'formal' and 'creative' work, brings us to a startling further understanding of the nature of literature, an understanding shared by too few concerned either with the theory or practice of teaching English, and an apt development of Inglis' already profound intuitions. Yet, like Inglis' teacher of English, Abbs' is not much in

evidence in the schools. Whereas the apparent absence in the schools of Inglis' teacher of English led us to a conjecture, yet to be explored, concerning the relative strengths of the literary and 'worldly' outlooks, Abbs provides explicitly the reasons for the non-appearance of his own teacher. He asserts that the secondary schools at present give little support to such a revolutionary approach to literature, while

'..one of the fundamental complaints made by students is that the universities, while they claim to be the centres of culture, imagination and reason, are often little more than places where unreal specialisms are taught, where learning and experience are severed..' (12)

In these explanations we find good reasons for the absence of both Abbs' and Inglis' teachers, reasons we will do well to consider. Abbs, in Root and Blossom, seems to pin his hopes on the teacher training college, where the intending teacher must be encouraged to

'..adventure both further out into his experience and further into it.. to risk himself in order to become more than he is.. The teacher, the tutor, can provide the conditions and support for such a journey..' (13)

But this is not the training college as it is, but as it ought to be. According to Abbs our present system of

education is the enemy of all he believes the teacher of English could, and should, be.

To sum up, then. An investigation of the work of Mathieson and her analysis of the teacher of English led us to a recognition of the potency of literature, and its impact on those who are in contact with it. This allowed us to appreciate the work of Inglis, who provides an account of literature's impact on the teacher: it provides him with a presently esoteric but finally valuable set of humane values and ideals which it is then his task to transmit to pupils. Abbs' vision of the teacher develops Inglis' line of argument, portraying literature not only as a repository for neglected humane values, but as a laboratory for the uncovering of new ones. The teacher of English should become in the classroom a kind of 'humane scientist', bent on his pupils' spiritual development. One difficulty we had with Abbs' and Inglis' insightful accounts of the teacher of English was the fact that teachers in the moulds described are little in evidence in the schools. The explanations offered, and supposed, suggested that the 'ordinary' world in general, and our education system in particular, somehow militate against the appearance of such humane teachers of English. It is this 'mechanism of containment', and its spiritual impact upon the

teacher, which we will require to examine in the course of the dissertation to follow.

Prior to that exploration, however, it is essential that, just as we examined current conceptions of the teacher of English, we should give some consideration to the fashion in which the teaching of literature was and is thought of in the Universities, in order that we may glean what knowledge we can concerning an institution which may figure strongly in our account of the teacher's spiritual condition.

The teaching of literature in Universities has long been an issue both controversial and mysterious, a fact to which representative writings both old and new on the subject readily attest. Cardinal Newman, writing in his On the Scope and Nature of University Education, provides recommendations concerning the treatment of literature in the University which illustrate the complexity of the issue. He writes approvingly of literature as constituting a part of that 'liberal knowledge' which,

'..while useful knowledge is the possession of truth as powerful, is the apprehension of it as beautiful. Pursue it.. to its furthest extent and its true limit, and you are led to the Eternal and Infinite..'(14)

A more practical point is also brought to our notice by Newman, who considers it a mistake

'..did we leave out literature from Education. For why do we educate except to prepare for the world.. If then a University is a direct preparation for the world, let it be what it professes. It is not a Convent; it is not a seminary; it is a place to fit men of the world for the world..'(15)

Literature is, to some extent, also a preserver of the power of discrimination. Deny the student literature

'..and for what have you reserved him? You have given him "a liberty unto" the multitudinous blasphemy of his day; you have made him free of its newspapers, its reviews.. its songs, its drama.. its enveloping, stifling atmosphere of death..'(16)

However, alongside these approving statements Newman delivers the following insistent warnings. Literature

'does not argue, but declares and insinuates: it is multiform and versatile: it persuades instead of convincing, it seduces, it carries captive..'(17)

Ultimately, it is dangerous

'..because it ignores the idea of moral evil.. [or] is open to the more grievous imputation of recognising it and understanding it too well..'(18)

What is most interesting about Newman's account of the place and teaching of literature in the University is not so much the tension evident in his argument - the result, one supposes, of his conflicting loyalties to Church and 'Liberal knowledge' - so much as his awareness of the moral impact of literature, independent of the University's direction, on the student. Here we have, by implication, a University which, teach literature as it might, will fail to shape literature in its own image, and fail to bend it to its own moral vision. Newman's analysis is interesting and almost existential, reminding us that literature does not originate in the Universities, and suggesting that it is not clay to be worked easily into different shapes.

Yet this is challenged brilliantly in the theories of FR Leavis. Leavis imagined literature in the University almost as a surgical instrument, a tool ideally designed to root out what he perceived as the moral evils of contemporary society and reassert long neglected humane values. Literature, far from being the morally uncertain and finally uncontrollable component of the liberal education of Newman's vision, is 'chief of the humanities':

'Can any teacher in a University school
of English.. feel comfortable as he

contemplates, in relation to the notions he likes to entertain of his function and responsibility, what is actually.. effected in their name?... Has English been justifying its recognised position as chief of the humanities and its key responsibility for education?'(19)

Literature, for Leavis, is 'more than a subject'. It has, as his follower Thompson aptly puts it,

'..[a] particular value.. in that it can create and heighten that critical attitude to our civilisation that current affairs teaching should strive after.. It is a commonplace that education must educate against the environment.'(20)

Literature may provide for the preparation of those destined to undertake this task by supplying the materials for

'..a training of intelligence that is at the same time a training of sensibility; a discipline of thought that is at the same time a discipline in scrupulous sensitiveness of response to delicate organisations of feeling, sensation and imagery.'(21)

Nor is this irrelevant in dealing with the world, because, in the words of IA Richards, perhaps the most insightful and distinguished of Leavis' allies,

'..the world of poetry has in no sense any different reality from the rest of the world and it has no special laws.. It is made up of experiences of exactly the same kinds as those which come to us in other ways.. it is [simply] more

highly and delicately organised than ordinary experiences.'(22)

Hence, we have another theory, and a worthy theory, of the place and teaching of literature in the University; literature admitted not with the trepidation and uncertainty of Newman, but welcomed as an important critical tool for the reshaping of the world. It can be employed, adapted, put to work to fulfil rather than confound the moral vision of its masters. Whatever the relative merits of Leavis' and Newman's theories, it is clear at least that they are at odds. Newman suggests that literature escapes inevitably the control of those who try to channel it, while Leavis insists, very convincingly, on its suitability for that very end. The disparity between these two accounts alerts us, symbolically, to the fact that the teaching of literature in Universities has long been a matter for dispute on the level of ideas, and final answers rarely arrived at.

Yet, just as we noted earlier that the question is often a fraught one, so too is it mysterious, for the teaching of literature in the Universities has gone on, despite these controversies, leading us to the institutions of the present day, whose situation we must still consider. Have the old disagreements been resolved, or new ones discovered? And, most important for the thesis

following, what can we learn of the philosophic experience of the contemporary student of literature, pursuing his literary studies on this higher level?

These questions are interesting ones, particularly in the light of Bernard Bergonzi's recent and very astute work on the condition of 'English Studies' in the Universities, Exploding English. Bergonzi's witty and entertaining analysis suggests that there is, at present, no unified philosophy concerning the teaching of literature in the Universities, and instead fragmentary or fragmented academic schools of thought concerning its appreciation. Bergonzi accounts for this situation as follows:

'In its origins, 'English' was, and remains, a synthetic subject, comprising several elements. A large University English department will contain experts on many things from, as the phrase goes, Beowulf to Virginia Woolf.. The diversity of what goes on in English departments is.. greater than in other.. areas. Many teachers, however, still have a loose sense of what is involved in the basic pedagogy of the subject, at least in undergraduate teaching. This might roughly be described as the close reading of texts, inserted into a literary-historical-biographical continuum..'(23)

However, in recent years much of this agreement has faltered:

'The bitterness of the early eighties has to be seen as a sign or symptom of unprecedented strain in literary education. It is a commonplace that scholarly arguments can be extremely fierce.. yet they were traditionally played according to agreed rules.. within a shared form of life.. Recent conflicts in the academic study of literature resemble the anger and confusion that would arise if a group of players found themselves on a field, without any agreement as to whether they were playing rugby or soccer or hockey or baseball; or some other game, whose precise nature and rules were still emerging..' (24)

Thus, according to Bergonzi, the study of literature has developed from the aforementioned 'close reading of texts, inserted into a literary-historical-biographical continuum' into a battleground of critical theories and philosophies, emerging with the weakening of the nineteenth century nationalistic, religious, ethical and aesthetic notions of literature (25) and exemplified by the Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic and poststructural initiatives, with very little in common. There is, for Bergonzi, no coherence to be found. Bergonzi, towards the conclusion of his book, puts forward some proposals - pragmatically, as he himself allows - to achieve a peaceful separation between the various camps. But these suggestions are less important for our present purpose than the confused situation giving rise to them. One wonders as to the impact of these divisions on the

student of literature: what does he take away from the University in terms of his understanding of literature? And what is the result of its reaction with the philosophy of literature, perhaps implicit and unexplicated, that it is not unreasonable to suppose he arrives at University with? And what of these various and warring critical theories of literature, theories 'English and Un-English', that we struggle to imagine him internalizing? Might not many scholars in fact fail to communicate them when left to expound, on an elemental level, the literature that makes up courses in the initial years of studying literature at University level? And if this is the case, what unconsidered or unconscious Weltanschauung do lecturers transmit, and what is its relation, if one may ask the question, to the world of everyday?

Bergonzi's work is admirable and illuminating in its analysis of the state of 'English Studies' among academics, but does not cast enough light on what is being learned of literature by students in the Universities. It is with this question, among others, that we shall be concerned in the thesis following, bearing in mind Newman's unsettling intuitions about the study of literature and Leavis' influential and uplifting plans for it, as much as Bergonzi's analysis of its

present condition. On that note we turn to the matter of my methodology, important as it is to my conclusions on the above, and other, issues.

We have said already that the condition of the teacher of English may well be illuminated by an examination of his spiritual experience and by an attempt to discover his spiritual biography. The valuable work of Mathieson, Abbs and Inglis led us to such a hypothesis, suggesting the impact that literature may have upon the 'inner being' of the teacher. In following this line of investigation, I set aside the perspectives offered by a sociological approach to his condition, preferring to seek a new and more revealing methodology. It is appropriate at that point to offer reasons for the rejection of the sociological perspective, and to indicate how the spiritual investigation mooted above may be essayed.

The first difficulty I find with the sociological approach concerns what it implies about our understanding of man. According to the sociologist, man owes what he is to his 'environment', is explained by it, and has at bottom no genuine freedom or responsibility. This notion gives us pause, for, at least, the following reasons. First of all, it is quite out of step with our inherited moral thinking. We assert, even in the light of speculative evidence to the contrary, that we are free and responsible for ourselves. More telling, even, might be the application of the self-referential critique: of

what value is a theory, such as the sociological one above, which is itself determined by its own premise?

Secondly, it seems to me that sociological explanations of felt human problems or dissatisfactions are not intuitively satisfactory, a necessary element if such explanations are to be meaningful to those apprised of them. They put us to learn 'new' concepts, such as class, gender and economics, which we then haltingly adduce in explanation of our difficulties. They force upon us the perspective of a prosaic god, but fail to find corroboration in our intuitions about the world, intuitions which breathe life into and illuminate arguments about it. C Wright Mills, in his The Sociological Imagination, is sharply aware of the apparent lack in man of a suitable susceptibility to sociological argument:

'The facts of contemporary history are also facts about the success and failure of individual men and women. When a society is industrialised, a peasant becomes a worker: a feudal lord.. becomes a businessman.. Yet men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. The well-being they enjoy, they do not usually impute to the big ups and downs of the society in which they live.'(26)

Nevertheless, the explanations of sociology may be perversely attractive, having an almost 'masochistic' appeal. They posit, invariably, a powerful, hostile (or at best indifferent) world acting on a helpless (and implicitly blameless) individual - what may be described as 'Willy Loman's syndrome', after the character in Miller's Death of A Salesman. There is something distinctly pleasurable in a state of affairs where persecution is the ineluctable lot of one's existence, but also something demeaning. Essentially for these reasons, then, I chose to reject the sociological approach to the condition of the teacher of English, and pursued a 'spiritual' line of thought.

How then, may a spiritual account of the teacher be provided? To mention the term 'spirit' in any argument leads us to a consideration of metaphysics. Thus, when we dissert on the spiritual condition of the teacher of English, we step beyond what we consider the 'facts' about him, and must prepare to speculate. But how do we approach such a speculation?

We might begin, drawing on our own spiritual experience of teaching English, with an intuition about the spiritual condition of the teacher of English. We might then, through the suggestive use of analogy, develop that

intuition and arrive at an argument concerning his condition. Thereupon we might transmit that argument, giving prominence to the analogy which originally suggests it. Thus might we seize the character of the teacher's condition, account for it, and communicate knowledge of it to others.

I anticipate three primary objections to this approach. First of all, there may be some who suggest that it is not sufficient to have recourse only to one's own spiritual experience: attention to the declared experience of other teachers of English, and their appraisal of their own spiritual condition, is required. Secondly, there may be others who will take issue with the use of intuition to grasp the essence of the teacher's experience, and others still who are unconvinced of the appropriateness of using analogy as a means of developing an argument about his condition, and as a primary medium through which that argument is communicated. In what follows, I will attempt to deal with these objections in their turn.

Firstly, then, the question of failing to have recourse to the declared spiritual experience of teachers of English. Does there exist, at present, any such declaration? If it exists at all in the literature of teaching, then it is bewilderingly diffuse, and quite unsystematic. Many texts

touching on the question, like Nicholas Ottv's Learner Teacher(27), consider the topic in terms of anecdote and impression at the expense of analysis. Such texts are worthwhile pointers to the fact that teachers enjoy a vital 'inner life', but do not take us, in their explorations, far enough.

Why not then, pursues our critic, conduct an investigation among teachers which would provide material more amenable to analysis? But this is to overlook the fact that, in our present moral climate, the notion of spirituality is, for a great many, a taboo subject, to be treated with flippancy or embarrassment. Spirituality suggests individuality, and individuality is, so many critics argue, systematically suppressed by increasingly technological societies. Peter Evans, in his book The Protest Virus, discusses EM Forster's pessimistic tale The Machine Stops as follows:

'The story is about human personality and how it can decay when human endeavour and physical human contact wither and die in a tranquillized existence. An advanced thinker says in the story: "There will come a generation that has got beyond fact, beyond impressions, a generation absolutely colourless, a generation

"seraphically free
from taint of human personality."'(28)

Would this albeit still only partially realised phenomenon not seriously inhibit a positive response by teachers on the question of their spiritual condition?

Again, there is the questionnaire, a presently ubiquitous tool, designed to preserve the anonymity of its respondents when addressing sensitive issues. However, it would not help us to frame, or even to know, the questions likely to unlock the teacher's spiritual arcana. If, however, we did succeed in eliciting well articulated responses from teachers, describing their spiritual condition, we would then have to take into account the following. It seems reasonable to suggest that those accounts of spiritual experience of most value are the result of an independent impulse on the writers' part, prompted by some felt exhilaration or dissatisfaction with life. Are the spiritual investigations which we solicit from teachers of English quite so valuable? Such investigations might amount to little more than routine examinations of the self at someone else's perhaps importune urging. For all these reasons I am unconvinced by objections on this admittedly delicate question.

Secondly, then, the question of using intuition to provide the germ of new knowledge. Intuition as a method of investigation is often held in poor regard, the approach having apparent 'magical' connotations. The immediate, rather than mediate, knowledge it yields has, for many, a value only as novelty or entertainment. It is impossible, say the critics of intuition, to know immediately, without recourse to some process of investigation. Yet this objection can be met by recourse to the fact that, when we speak of intuitive knowledge as immediate, we do so only from the perspective of the individual responsible for the intuition. He apprehends it immediately, but there may well be a process of investigation, not available to the conscious mind, determining his conclusions. If this is so, then intuitive knowledge is as 'mediate' as any other kind. Consider Robert Frost's poem, an Unstamped Letter in our Rural Letter Box, in which a tramp is suddenly and mysteriously awoken to the significance of the universe:

'.. Inside the brain
Two memories that long had lain,
Now quivered towards each other, lipped
Together, and together slipped;
And for a moment all was plain
That men have thought about in
vain..' (29)

A further objection to the role intuition may play in the advancement of knowledge is no more telling than the

above. To rely on intuition, some suggest, is to yield up an argument to the subjectivity of its advocate. Subjectivity is declared a dangerous phenomenon, perhaps furnishing the individual with 'his' truth, but far from being true knowledge, 'objective' knowledge. But can our knowledge of human experience be anything other than subjective, coloured by our own sensations and emotions? How may we escape that prison? We have a curious theory concerning what constitutes true or 'objective' knowledge, knowledge untouched by the sensation or emotion described above. We often assume that it is gained somehow through a consensus of subjectivities, the meeting and agreeing of human minds. This accretion of subjectivities incredibly transcends subjectivity to become 'objectivity', a new alchemist's wonder. Consider Roger Poole's account of what we call 'objectivity':

'Objectivity is what is commonly received as.. valid, all the attitudes, presuppositions, unquestioned assumptions typical of any given society. Objectivity is, for all practical purposes, the totality of what is taken to be the case, believed to be the case, affirmed to be the case.. Objectivity in any given society in fact gets defined as the political and social status quo.. is that which holds itself in place as the dominant and unquestioned objectivity of a given society.'(30)

Perhaps worth noting, too, is the 'moral' objection we have to intuited knowledge. In discovering knowledge by means of intuition, there are no obvious arduous dues to pay: the labour inherent in an empirical approach to knowledge, the philosophic struggle attendant on a theoretical approach to it, seem absent. Such knowledge as is discovered has not been deserved. This is a prejudice rather than a reasoned objection, and looks absurd in the light of the following, in which it becomes clear that intuition is recognised as a fundamental element in scientific discovery, which is popularly supposed to be the enemy of introspection.

In J Bronowski's brilliant meditative essay on the nature of the scientific method Science and Human Values, we find exploded, through a paraphrase of Karl Popper's fable, the notions that the scientist deals only in 'facts', and that his discoveries are the product purely of their accumulation:

'Suppose that someone wished to give his whole life to science. Suppose that he therefore sat down, pencil in hand, and for the next twenty, thirty, forty years recorded in notebook after notebook everything that he could observe. He may be supposed to leave out nothing: today's humidity, the racing results, the level of cosmic radiation, and the stockmarket prices and the look of Mars, all would be there. He would have compiled the most careful record of nature that has ever been made; and,

dying in the calm certainty of a life well spent, he would of course leave his notebooks to the Royal Society. Would the Royal Society thank him for the treasure of a lifetime of observation? It would not.. It would refuse to open them at all, because it would know without looking that the notebooks contain only a jumble of disorderly and meaningless items.'(31)

The scientist requires, according to Bronowski, the much abused gift of intuition if he is to make anything meaningful of his observations. Bronowski notes that Kepler published, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the three laws which describe the path of the planets. According to Bronowski, Kepler tells us that if one squares the year of a planet, one gets a number which is proportional to the cube of its average distance from the sun. Did Kepler arrive at these laws, asks Bronowski,

'.. by taking enough readings and then squaring and cubing everything in sight?.. [Kepler's] first step was a leap of imagination - to lift himself from the earth, and put himself wildly, speculatively into the sun.. We catch an image.. [of].. the virile man standing in the sun, arms outstretched, overlooking the planets.'(32)

Thus, intuition is a tool of great potential, having within it by implication the power to shape revolutions in humane thought as much as in scientific investigation.

We turn now to the question of analogy. I have suggested above that it may be used in constructing an argument concerning the teacher's condition and in expounding that argument to others. Again, we meet objections. Analogy is, so many assert, a suspect tool. We are told that we can rarely arrive at valid argument through the drawing of analogies. Things compared are usually more dissimilar than similar: analogy is misleading and sophistical. But must we accept the opprobrium heaped by the logician on analogy, and on that basis reject analogy? We need not. As with intuition, we may suggest that imaginative analogy forms the basis of the arguments of the pioneering scientist, whose revelations we eagerly applaud. Bronowski refers us to, among other examples, Hideki Yukawa's argument for the existence of the meson particle:

'He took as a starting point the fact that waves of light can sometimes behave as if they were separate pellets. From this he reasoned that the forces which hold the nucleus of an atom together might sometimes also be observed as if they were solid pellets. A schoolboy could see how thin Yukawa's analogy is, and how his teacher would be severe with it. Yet Yukawa..calculated and waited. He was right. The likeness had borne fruit.'(33)

Thus, an approach to knowledge through analogy is feasible, and may allow us discoveries and insights

which, were we to employ only those methods of which the logician approved, might otherwise be lost to us. Analogy may afford illumination and is, so Bronowski affirms, the basis of all argument: argument begins with the imaginative perception of likenesses. Froebel, when he 'grasped the inter-connection and unity of phenomena'(34), arrived at a valuable philosophy of human nature and a theory of education. Our present philosophy of primary education depends, at bottom, upon analogy drawn between child and plant. Our present political philosophy, again, is predicated on the Lockean notion of the 'atomistic' individual, who is uneasily bound, in social terms, to others.

Yet, even if our critic allows all of the above, he may still question the wisdom of transmitting an argument, communicating it to others, by presenting as its basis the illuminating original analogy. Surely this is to place an absurd burden upon one's reader, who will expect, and deserves, to be introduced to new knowledge, however arrived at, purely in terms of the 'logical' argument in which it may eventually be dressed. Bronowski's reply to this objection is a profound and thoughtful one. There are, he says, in all discovery, scientific and humane, two crucial elements. There is the act of creation, in which the 'unifying likeness' is

seized, and there is the act of appreciation. The act of appreciation, suggests Bronowski, depends on the re-enactment of the creative moment of discovery:

'The poem or the discovery exists in two moments of vision: the moment of appreciation as much as that of creation; for the appreciator must see the movement, wake to the echo which was started in the creation of the work. In the moment of appreciation we live again the moment when the creator saw and held the hidden likeness. When a simile takes us aback.. when a juxtaposition.. [is].. both odd and intriguing.. we do not merely nod over someone else's work. We re-enact the creative act, and we ourselves make the discovery again. At bottom there is no unifying likeness there until we too have seized it, we too have made it for ourselves.'(35)

Hence, we are obliged to set the entire process of the original discovery before our readers, at the same time paying them a compliment and devolving to them considerable responsibility. Yet there remains to be noted one aspect of the methodology we propose to bring to bear on our attempt to discover the spiritual condition of the teacher of English. While the scientist may well use intuition and analogy in the making, analysis and communication of his discoveries (a view shared by Ravetz, who also insists on the obscurity of the fundamental notions of science) we may still convince ourselves of the value of his methodology by having final recourse to the empirical proofs of his

arguments. Argument concerning human experience, however - whatever the pretensions of that argument and however it is devised - may not finally offer proof, for 'proof' implies 'truth', and who can say with certainty what is true of other human beings, or even of himself? In constructing arguments about human experience we are, ultimately, requiring others to share with us controversial visions, and this knowledge should, ideally, restrain our enthusiasms, without at the same time crippling our imaginations.

To sum up, then. We defended the methodology proposed for the exploration of the spiritual condition of the teacher of English on the following grounds. We found that sociological explanations of the teacher's condition, apart from the offence they give to our inherited moral thinking, were open to the self-referential critique, failed often to find the intuitive corroboration necessary to render them meaningful to those who hear them, and may encourage a perverse submission to, rather than critical consideration of, their doctrines. We dealt with three primary objections to our methodology itself. We defended our lack of recourse to the declared spiritual experience of teachers on the grounds that this is not at present well documented, and that to solicit it raises problems

connected with our present attitude to spirituality and with the validity of spiritual investigation which is to some extent 'commissioned'. We dealt with objections to the use of intuition as the basis for knowledge by rebutting ideas that it is a 'magical', immediate phenomenon, that it leads to an avoidable subjectivity, and that it is not the tool of 'true' discoverers such as scientists. We defended analogy, again by reference to the scientific method and the communication of its discoveries, as a means through which an argument concerning the teacher's spiritual condition may be constructed and transmitted. Thus our defence, with a caveat concerning the place of proof in arguments concerning human experience. With that, our investigations begin.

INTRODUCTION

'I am no great voyager
in other men's work:
no swallower nor devourer of volumes
nor pursuant of authors.
Perchance it is because
I find borne in my self knowledge or
apprehension enough..'
Donne: Letter to Sir Henry Wotton(?)
(1600)

'The discovery that the productive
synthesis of the imagination is the root
of all knowledge makes knowledge itself
problematical. For it means that we
invent our knowledge; that knowledge, in
some sense, is "fictional".' Macmurray:
The Self as Agent p.45

The 'official' account of the teacher of English, his role in school and his spiritual experience of teaching, is by now so familiar to both those within and without the profession that it may be described as part of a massively influential educational cliché. Firstly, the teacher is at bottom the tool and servitor of a society shaping itself according to a set of dominant values and ideas.

'The University graduate has been schooled for selective service among the rich of the world..' (1)

'..The role of the teacher revolves round the transmission of knowledge and the transmission of values; particularly by virtue of the second function teachers play a part in the socialisation of the child..' (2)

'..The teacher.. has.. certain legal responsibilities and is answerable to the community at large for aspects of his behaviour..' (3)

'..When it comes to the actual teachers in the schools.. they inevitably transmit middle-class values and reward those who share this particular perception of reality..' (4)

'..Schools make physical emasculation unnecessary by doing the job more effectively at the libidinal level.. School domesticates - socially emasculates - both girls and boys.. School requires conformity for survival and thus shapes the students to conform to the norms of survival..' (5)

'There is a wide-spread instinctive belief, quite apart from a mass of evidence, that teachers do have an impact on the ills or well-being of society.'(6)

Secondly, the relationship between teacher and pupil is typically defined in terms of force and compulsion:

'Teaching is often uncivilised, a struggle to maintain order in a confined space, outnumbered thirty to one by experienced disruptors..' (7)

'..Teachers must be prepared to have to do things they don't want to do, such as being firm, fearless and perhaps even unfriendly when they first take charge of a new class..' (8)

'..Some teachers.. say the boys and girls hate them; and often they hate the boys and girls. Over a period of years their hatred becomes known and builds up a barrier which they can never break down..' (9)

'.."Authority" in school is synonymous with the teachers and "obedience" the common lot of the pupils..' (10)

'..Moreover, there is often a conflict in a teacher's mind between what he would like to do and what he feels he must do to preserve order and keep up efficiency in the face of all the difficulties he has to contend with. Large classes, cramped classrooms and dining space, narrow corridors and overcrowded schools, lax or faulty family discipline at home, may seem to make any extensive relaxation of fairly rigid discipline a hazardous adventure..' (11)

Thirdly, the teacher's spiritual experience of all this is seen in terms of his early idealism before embarking fully on teaching, and mature cynicism once exposed to the 'realities' of school life:

'..The gulf between the theories propounded by Training Colleges and the actual practices of schools.. A teacher.. follows the methods of those colleagues who seem to be most successful in controlling a class. Teaching becomes a craft, a job to be done unemotionally and deliberately..' (12)

'..We have seen.. the kinds of pressure that are put upon new teachers, involving them often in painful compromises and acceptance of unreasonable and unreasoning authority.. [the newcomer to teaching].. is either left to sink or swim by himself or he.. [has].. simply to conform to existing patterns of [authoritarian] teacher behaviour..' (13)

'..The radical young teacher, interested in experimentation, and with a burning faith in the power of educational institutions to transform society..' (14)

'..tries to be relaxed, treat the lads as equals. This does not work because they play him up.. Then he begins to get tired.. After spending the first weeks of the holiday in bed, he resolves to do as a friendly colleague advises - to "really get on top of the blighters from the word go".. In a year or so.. he is another drill sergeant. Thus Black School perpetuates itself..' (15)

'..There are, perhaps, two phases to the process of early professional socialisation. There is a preparatory

phase during which skills and ideals are learnt. This is succeeded by a phase deeply affected by the meeting with organisational reality when theory is forgotten under trying practical experience. The progressive goals of the lecturer in the college of education are displaced by those of the practising teacher..'(16)

'..Teachers are.. agents of cultural diffusion.. hired to carry light into dark places.. the teacher goes out with a vigorous idealism, determined to pass his values on to others.. But he finds the world without comprehension of his values, unready to receive them, interested in coarser things.. He struggles in vain.. finally yields to it. The Messianic spirit dies, his own grasp upon his ideals is enfeebled, and he sinks into a stubborn and unreasoning discontent.'(17)

The spiritual experience of the teacher of English - and that, it is suggested, of all teachers, among whom the teacher of English is simply an egregious example - is essentially what we may describe as an institution-bred 'in-school' Fall from pedagogic idealism into cynicism. For various reasons the teacher fails in what we are led to believe is his attempt in the institutional context of the school to communicate values he has adopted as his own and to see them bear fruit in human terms. Like the biblical Fall from grace, this secular Fall is not entirely disastrous in its implications. Just as Adam and Eve accept their new unhappy lot of pain and toil and death, and go on to reach a level of stability on which

they are not alienated from God but still stand in a kind of decayed relationship to Him, so the teacher realises the Quixotic nature of his early intentions and accepts the 'realities' of teaching.

How credible is this account? I feel we ought to be wary of accepting it uncritically and would justify taking exception to it on the following cautionary grounds. First, we must bear in mind that this account of the teacher's spiritual experience is largely a reported account, ostensibly gathered from teachers' accounts of their situation and relayed to other teachers wholesale. In this lies a danger: we must bear in mind that explanations of phenomena or situations which are widely enough disseminated may be adopted without much thought by a great many people. If teachers are exposed, as they undoubtedly are, to the 'idealism rebuffed' argument through legitimate educational channels, then we must not be surprised if many adopt without serious reflection this extremely convenient explanation of their malaise - for a malaise in terms of motivation and morale on the part of many teachers is, as Mathieson observes, certainly with us.

Secondly, there is the 'mythic' character of the explanation itself. Its dressing up in theoretical structures aside, the story of the teacher's spiritual experience is a creation myth in small: something happened in the school to teachers long ago to make them unhappy. And creation myths, it is important to note, not only explain the past and present - they justify them.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the very terms of the 'idealism rebuffed' argument leave it open to charges of partiality, something which becomes clear when we consider carefully the nature of ideals. A little reflection tells us that there are in fact several kinds of ideals. There are what we may call 'militant' ideals, which fly in the face of historical reality. Such an ideal might be the Christian exhortation to 'love thine enemy'. Few people are able to do this (or want to) yet the ideal stands, defying actions in the 'real' world. There are also what we may call 'protestant' ideals, ideals which arise from a current situation or eventuality which we deem undesirable and work against it. An example of this might be the ideal of a nuclear free society. The thought then strikes us that the teacher's ideals cannot be of either of these kinds because they are influenced and damaged by real life circumstances. After all, the ideal which exhorts us to

love our enemy does not vanish because wars happen with depressing regularity, nor does the ideal of a nuclear-free society disappear when society continues to own nuclear weapons. Is there, then, a type of ideal which is vitiated by real life circumstance? Undoubtedly, there is. 'Innocent' ideals exist which come into being not as a response to the world but due to ignorance of the world. A child, for instance, may hold the innocent ideal that adults are never irresponsible. When he encounters adults being irresponsible this ideal is often shattered. In fact it might be fair to say that 'innocent' ideals are not really ideals at all but merely illusions, wishful thinking, fancies. Teachers' ideals, which are disrupted by 'reality', seem to fall into this category. If we allow this, then the statement that teachers are only initially idealistic about teaching actually implies that teachers are deluded about teaching, and immediately the assertion enters the political arena as a partisan declaration.

For these reasons, then, we are justified in looking further into the question of the spiritual condition of the teacher of English, beginning with the intuition already mooted in our preface.

CHAPTER ONE:
A SPIRITUAL TYPOLOGY OF TEACHERS

'Wee discernen not graces inly or aright;
We onely perceive them by a false light
set out and puffed up with arte..'
Montaigne: Essays: The Third Booke Ch 12

What intelligence may we glean, through the intuitive approach described above, concerning the spiritual condition of the teacher of English? My investigation yielded a typology of teachers, which was greatly illuminated by recourse to analogy. The results of this approach are, in what follows, presented for the imaginative as well as the critical consideration of the reader.

I mean to suggest three 'fringe of consciousness' accounts of the teacher, and from these choose the one which approximates most closely the teacher of English. In the chapters following this one, it will be my task to justify my choice as far as possible in terms of the spiritual forces acting upon the teacher in his personal and professional life. So as to highlight the differences and similarities of these conceptions, we shall set these visions of the teacher in a context in which they can be seen to 'live' while we examine them, although this context will not be that of the secondary school, nor any kind of school at all. So that we can view the types as imaginatively as possible, we shall locate them in a setting which, while it shares many of the characteristics of the school as social organisation, will help us to avoid some of the assumptions which come

with too great familiarity. Hence, we turn to literature and Herman Melville's Billy Budd, an allegorical tale of good and evil, dealing with life on board a British man-of-war ship in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Therein live characters, existing in uneasy relationship to one another, who will serve as archetypes of our three intuitive conceptions of the teacher. The story in which our characters figure concerns a small society not unlike the school in many respects. Those who serve on the Indomitable, besides the officers, are pressed men. The ship when at sea is a society apart and with its own rules and procedures. At all times there is the lurking danger of insurrection, which would mean disaster for those in command. It is in such an atmosphere that our story opens and we meet, in the way that we meet someone through the dispassionate yet indulgent account of a third party, our first conception of the teacher.

'In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed mariners, man-of-war's men or merchant-sailors in holiday attire ashore on liberty. In certain instances they would flank, or like a body-guard quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like Aldebaran among the lesser lights of his constellation. That signal object was the "Handsome Sailor" of the less prosaic time alike of the military and merchant navies. With no perceptible trace of the vainglorious about him,

rather with the off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality, he seemed to accept the spontaneous homage of his ship-mates.. The moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make. Indeed, except as toned by the former, the comeliness and power, always attractive in masculine conjunction, hardly could have drawn the sort of honest homage the Handsome Sailor in some examples received from his less gifted associates. Such a cynosure, at least in aspect, and something such too in nature.. was welkin-eyed Billy Budd, or Baby Budd, as more familiarly under circumstances hereafter to be given he at last came to be called, aged twenty-one, a foretopman of the British fleet towards the close of the last decade of the eighteenth century.'(1)

Our first image of the teacher, then, is that of the teacher as 'Handsome Sailor'. In moral nature, if not actually in physical make, the teacher is not merely upright but unspoiled. He moves among his pupils with the 'off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality', and is accepted perfectly by those in his charge and under his tutelage with something like the 'spontaneous homage' that Melville has accorded to Billy Budd, foretopman. This ideal representation of the teacher is as like his pupils as unlike them. He understands their nature, their fears and insecurities and enthusiasms, and is somehow able sympathetically to share them, like 'some superior figure of their own class.. Aldebaran among the lesser lights of his constellation'. He makes their enforced attendance at school almost a festive pleasure.

He and his pupils are, in a sense, always 'in holiday attire ashore on liberty'. An important part of his relationship with his pupils is their proprietorial and protective attitude towards him: they 'like a body-guard quite surround' him. Yet he is assertive and authoritative in his relationship with them - 'comeliness and power.. in masculine conjunction'. He is important, yet not exalted, and he, like Billy Budd or 'Baby Budd.. aged twenty-one', is almost always experienced as young(2), whatever his age. Although he is seldom met with, he is not quite removed to the level of an Ideal. He was more to be remarked on in the past than now, it is true, but this past is only just around the corner, 'in the time before steamships'. He is a 'natural' teacher in the sense that he seems not to have been imposed, however benevolently, upon his pupils but to have sprung up from among them, like a deus ex machina, to solve Rousseau's problem of the separation of man from his own kind:

'God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil.. He mutilates his dog, his horse and his slave. He destroys and defaces all things.. He will have nothing as nature made it, not even himself, who must learn his paces like a saddle horse. Yet things would be worse without this education and mankind cannot be made by halves.. a man left to himself from birth would be more of a monster than the rest..' (3)

Yet although the teacher as Handsome Sailor exists in time and in reality, there is enough of the ideal in him to make him somehow destined to remain outside of history: he will always come down to us in books about famous people that he taught, and only rarely carry the mantle of fame himself. To describe him in and as a part of his historical context - inside of history, as an egregious or pivotal actor - has a violently distorting effect on him. An ideal example of this is the 'sociological' treatment of Dr. Arnold. In his fabulous context as inspirer of men and humane reformer he is his essential self. Once his supposed role as mentor to imperialistic brutes is 'established' by a comparison of his ideas with the ethos of the Empire, we lose all sight of him(4). (Lesser figures often seem to have contributed more of a concrete nature than the teacher as Handsome Sailor - Thring, for instance(5), with his practical reforming impulse and his grasp of the importance of extra-curricular activities - and never suffer the kind of distortion described above.) Nor is the teacher as Handsome Sailor quite an idealist, any more than he is himself quite an ideal. He could never be envisaged as viewing the child in the way of those whom Lawrence criticized as follows:

'The very first thing of all to be recognised is the danger of idealism. It is the one besetting sin of the human race. It means the fall into automatism, mechanism, and nullity. It is no use contemplating the development of the modern child, born to be another unit of self-conscious love-will: an ideal-born beastly little entity with a devil's will of its own.. and a Satan's own seraphic self-consciousness, like a beastly Botticelli brat.'(6)

The teacher as Handsome Sailor's understanding and philosophy of man seems pleasantly conservative, uncontroversial and mystical, rather after the order of Balzac's:

'Man is at once Cause and Effect: he is nourished, he nourishes in return. When you call God the Creator, you belittle Him.. Must not he have proceeded by unity of purpose? He emitted principles which were compelled to develop in accordance with His general laws, and subject to the conditions of their environment..'(7)

This element of 'conservative mysticism' in the teacher as Handsome Sailor is evinced by the nature of his influence over his pupils. We pick up Billy Budd's story again as he is transferred reluctantly to the Indomitable by the master of his former ship, the Rights-of-Man.

'These proceedings over, the Master broke the silence; and there lurked a rueful reproach in the tone of his voice:

"Lieutenant, you are going to take my best man from me, the jewel of 'em.. Before I shipped that young fellow, my forecastle was a rat-pit of quarrels.. But Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. Not that he preached to them or said or did anything in particular; but a virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones. They took to him like hornets to treacle; all but the buffer of the gang, the big shaggy chap with the fire-rod whiskers.. Billy forebore with him.. but nothing served. So, in the second dog-watch one day the Red Whiskers in presence of the others, under pretence of showing Billy just whence a sirloin was cut - for the fellow had once been a butcher - insultingly gave him a dig under the ribs. Quick as lightning Billy let fly his arm. I dare say he never meant to do quite as much as he did, but anyhow he gave the burly fool a terrible drubbing. It took about half a minute, I should think.. And will you believe it, Lieutenant, the Red Whiskers now really loves Billy - loves him, or is the biggest hypocrite that ever I heard of.'(8)

Here we have an account of the teacher as Handsome Sailor's charisma, which enables him to create a kind of beatific idyll out of the worst of situations simply on account of his presence: 'a virtue going out of him, sugaring the sour ones'. This charisma has nothing of the suspect or manipulative in it, being the sheer moral authority of a 'virtue', and it is the sort of moral authority that is not merely unostentatious but almost self-effacing. Nothing in particular is said or done, but his purposes are met. Within him too is the power not

only to punish and be respected, but to punish and be loved as a result. This is a particularly egregious feature of the teacher as Handsome Sailor in school mythology, his success in this respect popularly attributed to the fact that there is to be found

'..in the great teacher, no matter how unobtrusively.. strength of conviction.. his own heart and convictions will come through..' (9)

However, in the case of the teacher as Handsome Sailor these 'convictions' will impress, rather than transform, pupils who come in contact with them. Pupils of a certain character will come under his influence but not in their essential nature be influenced by him (10). In the teacher as Handsome Sailor the subtle element of threat to the personality is removed. The Red Whiskers is a rogue and a braggart who loves Billy Budd and is tempered by him - but who is still a rogue and a braggart for all that. His essential nature remains unchanged. Thus the teacher as Handsome Sailor emerges as a stabilising figure who provides order, but offers little real interference in the lives of his pupils. His relationship with them, though subtle in its processes, is simple and finally superficial: they take to him not as erring spirits to a divine soul, but simply 'as hornets to treacle'. He is essentially a conservative

force and approaches his pupils with the modest acceptance of what is that Jeremy Taylor exhorts us towards:

'To be angry with God, to quarrel with the divine providence by repining against an unalterable.. is an argument of a huge folly, and the parent of a great trouble..' (11)

Thus far, we have given an account of the teacher as Handsome Sailor solely in terms of his relationship with his pupils. We have yet to consider his position in the school. The narrative resumes:

'The transfer from chest to bag was made. And, after seeing his man into the cutter.. the lieutenant pushed off from the Rights-of-Man. That was the merchant-ship's name; tho' by her master and crew abbreviated in sailor fashion into the Rights. The hard-headed Dundee owner was a staunch admirer of Thomas Paine whose book in rejoinder to Burke's arraignment of the French Revolution had been published for some time and had gone everywhere..

But now, when the boat swept under the merchant-man's stern, and officer and oarsmen were noting - some bitterly and others with a grin - the name emblazoned there; just then it was that the new recruit jumped up from the bow.. and, waving his hat to his silent shipmates sorrowfully looking over at him from the toprail, bade the lads a genial goodbye. Then, making a salutation as to the ship herself, "And good-bye to you too, old Rights of Man". "Down, Sir!" roared the lieutenant, instantly assuming all the rigor of his rank, though with difficulty repressing a smile..

As the handsome sailor, Billy Budd's position aboard the seventy-four was something analogous to that of a rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the highborn dames of the court. But this change in circumstances he scarce noted. As little did he observe that something about him provoked an ambiguous smile in one or two harder faces among the blue-jackets.. with little or no sharpness of faculty or any trace of the wisdom of the serpent, nor yet quite a dove, he possessed that kind and degree of intelligence going along with the unconventional rectitude of a sound human creature, one to whom not yet has been proffered the questionable apple of knowledge. He was illiterate; he could not read; but he could sing and like the illiterate nightingale was sometimes the composer of his own song.. nevertheless, there was just one thing amiss in him.. an occasional liability to a vocal defect. Though in the hour of elemental uproar.. he was everything that a sailor should be, yet under sudden provocation of strong heart-feeling, his voice otherwise singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within, was apt to develop an organic hesitancy, in fact more or less of a stutter, or even worse..

The avowal of such an imperfection in the Handsome Sailor should be evidence not alone that he is not presented as a conventional hero, but also that the story in which he is the main figure is no romance.'(12)

The teacher as Handsome Sailor is always considered innocent of collusion with the darker intentions and purposes of the school: the restriction of freedom, the encouragement of conformity and unquestioning obedience and so forth. Like the name of the merchant ship that

Billy takes his leave of, the official intentions of the school as an agent of instruction and enlightenment excite wide-spread amusement and cynical disbelief, but the teacher as Handsome Sailor, like Billy Budd, is blind to such deceptions. Billy quite without irony bids farewell to the Rights-of-Man without permission from his superior, who rebukes him sharply, 'though with difficulty repressing a smile'. The teacher as Handsome Sailor is not merely out of step with but entirely remote from the 'real' world of teaching. Blind to what goes on, he never challenges it in the name of his pupils, who would not expect it of him. This refusal to intervene, or incapacity to see the need for intervention, is attributable not to ignorance but to a lack of cynical sophistication or 'worldliness'. He is the 'rustic beauty from the provinces.. [in] competition with the highborn dames of the court'. The teacher as Handsome Sailor's powers of insight are not doubted, but they are visionary and poetic rather than immediate and practical: he can sing but cannot read. The essential powerlessness of the teacher as Handsome Sailor in his institutional school setting, further emphasized by his inability to speak when under 'sudden provocation of strong heart-feeling', is the note on which our first account of the teacher ends. He is in himself a striking figure: reliable, innately good and conservative, a figure who

exists in a school world in which, unfortunately, there is 'no romance', any more than in what is to follow in the life of Billy Budd, foretopman.

Our second intuitive account of the teacher leads us to shift the focus of our attention from the Handsome Sailor to his noble new master, Captain the Honourable Edward Fairfax Vere, loyal servant to his majesty the King and commander of the Indomitable, a ship sailing in troubled times and waters.

'Yes, the outbreak at the Nore was put down. But not every grievance was redressed. If the contractors.. were no longer permitted to ply some practices.. impressment, for one thing, went on..

Discontent foreran the Two Mutinies, and more or less it lurkingly survived them.

..But on board the seventy-four in which Billy now swung his hammock, very little in the manner of the men and nothing obvious in the demeanour of the officers would have suggested to an ordinary observer that the Great Mutiny was a recent event. In their general bearing and conduct the commissioned officers of a warship naturally take their tone from the commander, that is if he have that ascendancy of character that ought to be his..

Captain the Honourable Edward Fairfax Vere, to give his full title, was a bachelor of forty or thereabouts, a

sailor of distinction even in a time prolific of renowned seamen.. he had seen much service, been in various engagements, always acquitting himself as an officer mindful of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline; thoroughly versed in the science of his profession, and intrepid to the verge of temerity, though never injudiciously so.

..Ashore in the garb of a civilian, scarce anyone would have taken him for a sailor, more especially that he never garnished unprofessional talk with nautical terms.. It was not out of keeping with these traits that on a passage where nothing demanded his paramount action, he was the most undemonstrative of men..

..Captain Vere, though practical enough, upon occasion would at times betray a certain dreaminess of mood. Standing alone on the weatherside of the quarter deck, one hand holding the rigging, he would absently gaze at the blank sea.. In the navy he was popularly known by the appellation - "Starry Vere."

..His settled convictions were as a dyke against those invading waters of novel opinion, social, political and otherwise, which carried away as in a torrent no few minds in those days.. Captain Vere disinterestedly opposed them because they seemed to him incapable of embodiment in lasting institutions.. at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind.'(13)

Our second 'fringe-of-consciousness' account of the teacher in our schools is that of the teacher as 'Pragmatic Hero'. Unlike the teacher as Handsome Sailor, the Pragmatic Hero lives very much in the glare of harsh

institutional reality, whether that of ships or of schools. He is well aware, despite official blandishments, of the repressive functions of schools and understands the atmosphere of half-hearted discontent that they produce, just as on the Indomitable 'discontent foreran the Two Mutinies and more or less it lurkingly survived them'. Like the teacher as Handsome Sailor he has a marked impact on those he is responsible for, and like the Handsome Sailor his role is essentially a stabilising and conservative one. Unlike the Handsome Sailor, however, he is skilled in a kind of permitted deceit. He is there to make the situation in the school seem palatable to its involuntary attendees. He sets a tone, which has a transforming effect on the way those around him see reality, just as on the Indomitable 'very little in the manner of the men and nothing obvious in the demeanour of the officers would have suggested to an ordinary observer that the Great Mutiny was a recent event'. As a commander or teacher he achieves this tone through 'that ascendancy of character that ought to be his'. To put it baldly, the teacher as Pragmatic Hero is recognised in his ability to convince others to behave as if the world outside did not exist. Pupils will be attentive and respectful after a fashion that is not expected of them outside the school, and would strike the unprepared observer as somewhat dated, though quite as

things should be. He is the preserver of an older social order which through him has its effect on present generations, and he is well aware of what he is doing-unlike the teacher as Handsome Sailor, who neither acts consciously to deceive his pupils nor has any sense of his actions as in any way political. The teacher as Pragmatic Hero possesses charisma, but of a more conventional kind than the Handsome Sailor. It is what we may describe as Weberian charisma(14), the agent of a powerful organisation seeking to make its control of a situation seem more acceptable to those caught up in it. The teacher as Pragmatic Hero is often seen, as we might expect, in a position of some responsibility in the school. He is the humane but undeniably self-interested mediator between the power of the school and the impotence of pupils and many teachers.

His 'moral ascendancy' is a thing greatly different from the innate goodness of the teacher as Handsome Sailor. It is the result of a thorough learning of the school or teaching 'rule-book', and the ability to reflect circumspectly, though not profoundly, on school life. This sense of measured action is mirrored in Vere's mindfulness 'of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline'; his knack of circumspect resolution is reflected in the account of

Vere as 'intrepid to the verge of temerity, though never injudiciously so'. The teacher as Pragmatic Hero is an ambivalent character, for he is a juggler of priorities and balancer of interests, yet his name carries weight and authority. He is reliable and evenhanded and - like Vere - he is 'truth', though not goodness, personified.

His identity is as obscure as that of the Handsome Sailor, but while the latter is unknowable as a personality because he has so much of the ideal within him, the teacher as Pragmatic Hero is unknowable because he practices, when no demands are made upon him, a deliberate self-effacement.

This is paralleled by Vere's tendency 'on a passage where nothing demanded his paramount action' to be 'the most undemonstrative of men'. His nature is of a sort that would be untroubled by the threat that Eliot has his Tempter make to Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral:

'When miracles cease and the faithful
desert you
And men shall only do their best to
forget you
And later is worse, when men will not
hate you
Enough to defame or to execrate you,
But pondering the qualities you lacked
Will only try to find the historical
fact
When men shall declare that there was no
mystery,

About this man who played a certain part
in history.'(15)

While the teacher as Handsome Sailor is an almost-ideal rather than a person, the teacher as Pragmatic Hero is a role rather than a person. Vere off duty is similarly unaccountable: 'ashore, in the garb of a civilian, scarce anyone would have taken him for a sailor, more especially that he never garnished unprofessional talk with nautical terms'.

Yet the teacher as Pragmatic Hero has a further curious dimension. Intuition whispers that he has convictions and ideals, though these again are resoundingly conservative, 'as a dyke against those invading waters of novel opinion, social, political and otherwise, which carried away as in a torrent no few minds in those days'. There is presumed in him, as in the teacher as Handsome Sailor, an element of mysticism, but of an ambiguous, speculative and passive kind, indulged in as a relief from the world of crushing practicality that it is his business to negotiate. Hence he betrays at times 'a certain dreaminess of mood' and looks 'absently.. off at the blank sea.. In the navy he was popularly known by the appellation - "Starry Vere"'. His humanity is most clearly evinced in this absent escape from

'.. the necessity of always talking.. I can think of no greater torture than to be obliged to talk continually and without a moment for reflection..' (16)

Thus our teacher as Pragmatic Hero. Our third account of the teacher is drawn from a darker understanding of life:

'But among the petty officers was one who, having much to do with the story, may as well be forthwith introduced. His portrait I essay, but shall never hit it. This was John Claggart, the Master-of-Arms. But that sea-title may to landsmen seem somewhat equivocal. Originally, doubtless, that petty-officer's function was the instruction of the men in the use of arms, sword or cutlass. But very long ago.. that function ceased; the master-of-arms of a great ship becoming a sort of Chief of Police, charged among other matters with the duty of preserving order on the populous lower gun-decks.

Claggart was a man about five and thirty, somewhat spare and tall, yet of no ill figure upon the whole. His hand was too small and too shapely to have been accustomed to hard toil.. It served Claggart in his office that his eye could cast a tutoring glance. His brow was of the sort phrenologically associated with more than average intellect.. [and of] a pallor tinged with a faint shade of amber akin to the hue of time-tinted marble of old. This complexion, singularly contrasting with the red.. visages of the sailors, and in part the result of his official seclusion from the sunlight, tho' it was not exactly displeasing, nevertheless seemed to hint of something defective or abnormal in the constitution and the blood. But his general aspect and manner were so suggestive of an education and career incongruous with his naval function that when not actively engaged in it he looked like a man of high

quality, social and moral, who for reasons of his own was keeping incog. Nothing was known of his former life.

Among certain grizzled sea-gossips of the gun-decks and forecastle went a rumor perdue that the master-of-arms was a chevalier who had volunteered into the King's navy by way of compounding for some mysterious swindle whereof he had been arraigned at the King's Bench.. [but] the verdict of the sea quidnuncs has been cited only by way of showing what sort of moral impression the man made upon rude uncultivated natures whose conceptions of human wickedness were necessarily of the narrowest, limited to ideas of vulgar rascality, - a thief among the swinging hammocks during a night-watch, or the man-brokers and land-sharks of the sea-ports..

..In a list of definitions included in the authentic translation of Plato.. occurs this: "Natural Depravity: a depravity according to nature".. Civilisation, especially if of the austerer sort, is auspicious to it, it folds itself in the mantle of respectability. It has its certain negative virtues serving as silent auxiliaries. It never allows wine to get within its guard. It is not going too far to say that it is without vices or small sins. There is a phenomenal pride in it that excludes.. anything mercenary or avaricious. In short the depravity here meant partakes nothing of the sordid or sensual. It is serious, but free from acerbity. Though no flatterer of mankind it never speaks ill of it.

But the thing which in eminent instances signalises so exceptional a nature is this:

though the man's even temper and discreet bearing would seem to intimate a mind peculiarly subject to the law of reason, not the less in his heart he would seem to riot in complete exemption from that law, having apparently little

to do with reason further than to employ
it as an.. implement for effecting the
irrational.'(17)

John Claggart, petty officer, represents our third account of the teacher: the teacher as Alien Personality or Hostile Consciousness. The first thing that strikes the onlooker about him is the gulf of understanding and sympathy between observer and observed. Like Melville we may 'essay, but shall never hit' his portrait. He is a Teacher, a being whose nature cannot even be imagined. As to his inner condition, speculation is useless. Rather than a humane enlightener he seems 'a sort of Chief of Police, charged.. with the duty of preserving order on the populous lower gun-decks'. Thus to his pupils his 'sea-title.. seem[s] somewhat equivocal'. He is someone in the guise of a teacher - an alien personality, a hostile consciousness, in the classroom under false pretences subtle enough to deceive his superiors.

The 'tutoring glance' of this model of the teacher carries not reproof but threat. He seems intelligent and well-presented, but detached from his circumstances to the extent that he seems as if he does the job of teacher only because of a set of unusual circumstances or an odd personal situation which one would be afraid to investigate - 'his general aspect and manner were so

suggestive of an education and career incongruous with his naval function that when not actively engaged.. he looked like a man of high quality, social and moral, who for reasons of his own was keeping incog'. In some ways he does not seem to be fully alive, moving pale and ethereal among the 'red visages' of his pupils. He seems in some ways to belong to a past epoch, and looks ahead of him into the middle distance with the paused and delicate concentration of a statue from classical times, its 'pallor tinged with a faint shade of amber.. akin to.. time-tinted marble of old'. You feel that he knows his subject, but that the extent of what he knows and its meaning to him in personal terms makes the transmission of his knowledge impossible. It is as if, beyond his formal classroom duties, he wishes to be forgotten by all those around him, as if he wished to be thought of as Paul, in Frost's poem, wishes others to think of the wife that he has but cares not to display:

'Owning a wife with him meant owning
her.
She wasn't anybody else's business,
Either to praise her or so much as name
her, and he'd thank people not to think
of her.
Murphy's idea was that a man like Paul
Wouldn't be spoken to about a wife
In any way the world knew how to
speak.'(18)

Like Claggart, his nature might helplessly be described as one of 'natural depravity', for his virtues of continence and responsibility are 'negative' insofar as they seem somehow to work against the institutional order of the school while apparently carrying out all that it asks of him. The 'depravity' of the teacher as Alien Personality or Hostile Consciousness is one involving ideals or principles foreign to the order he is in his working life a part of: 'in short, the depravity here meant partakes nothing of the sordid or sensual'. And, according to our intuition, his external calmness and air of detachment conceals a rebel of the most profound type, who rejects life as it is understood by those around him and 'in his heart.. riot[s] in complete exemption from that law'. And although his pupils cannot conceive of his delinquency in other than very prosaic terms - as 'a thief among the swinging hammocks during a night-watch, or the man-brokers and land-sharks of the sea-ports' - they are convinced that in the teacher as Alien Personality or Hostile Consciousness there is 'something defective or abnormal in the constitution and the blood'.

Thus our intuitive conceptions of the teacher. What I suggest is that the germ of each character - the innocence and innate goodness of the teacher as Handsome Sailor; the fairness, humanity and unabashed self-interest of the teacher as Pragmatic Hero; the alienation and riotous inner rebellion of the teacher as Hostile Consciousness - informs a valuable understanding of the teacher, and allows us an imaginative insight rarely attendant on a prosaic approach to his condition.

Can the teacher of English in the secondary school be understood in terms of any of the characters we have described? I believe so. Both the teacher as Handsome Sailor and the teacher as Pragmatic Hero are pictures of the exceptional rather than the average teacher. The 'ordinary' teacher, I suggest, conforms, to a lesser or greater extent, to our vision of the teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness' - a creature at once faintly and fundamentally suspect, patently and obscurely unlike everyone else. My argument that the teacher of English is indeed best represented by the image of the teacher as Hostile Consciousness or Alien Personality should become apparent in the remainder of this thesis, finding its justification therein.

If indeed we recognise Melville's model as our teacher of English, if he suffers from what we may only call a severe spiritual malaise, then how does he come to such a pass? The cause must lie in something capable of touching the sufferer to the very root of his being, and to guess at what that is requires reflection upon the kind of world in which he finds himself, and the ideas impinging on his consciousness and spirit, qualis ab incepto.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND THE WORLD

'There is a very real danger of our drifting into an attitude of contempt for humanity. We know quite well that we have no right to do so, and that it would lead us into the most sterile relation to our fellow-men.. We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.'

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: 'After Ten Years' in De Gruchy (ed): Dietrich Bonhoeffer p.261-262.

With what kind of philosophy of life does the teacher of English grow up? We all of us know the answer to that: we recognise it in our attitudes to the business of living. Formulating that answer is more difficult, but an attempt can be made. Most people, I submit, have moments of doubt about the meaning and significance of living, but on the whole recognise it as a self-justifying experience: the point of living is simply to live. Whatever happens during a life is never cause for ceasing to live hopefully. When our loved ones die or plans go badly awry this is not sufficient reason to lose faith in life. Most people, experiencing as they do life's vicissitudes, would probably confirm this. People too, I submit, expect life to change them on the 'journey', turning a child into a youth, a lover, a father, with all the differing aspirations and attitudes attendant on these stages. But, as we noted above, we are not simply passive acceptors of life's lot. We dread life to some degree, hold questions about its point and purpose, and thus the apparent confidence with which we face life takes a measure of moral courage.

In the course of this chapter we will examine the implications of this outlook on life and any possible opposition to it, all with a bearing on ascertaining the

reason for the malaise of our teacher of English. In order to discuss fruitfully this outlook on life we turn to Paul Tillich's analytic account of the courage we have just described.

Tillich, in The Courage to Be, describes the spiritual condition of secular man in the West today in terms of a threatening and profound 'anxiety' concerning the meaning and purpose of human existence, an anxiety assuaged by celebrating man's attempts both as an individual and as part of a social group to live without reference to ideas or principles outwith himself.

Tillich's account of anxiety marks it out very clearly as central to an understanding of our modern outlook in the West:

'Anxiety and fear have the same ontological root but they are not the same in actuality.. Fear, as opposed to anxiety, has a definite object.. which can be faced, analysed, attacked, endured.. But this is not so with anxiety, because anxiety has no object, or rather.. is the negation of every object. He who is in anxiety is, insofar as it is mere anxiety, delivered to it without help.. The only object is the threat itself but not the source of the threat, because the source of the threat is "nothingness".. Anxiety, if not modified by the fear of an object..

is always the anxiety of ultimate non-being.'(1)

Tillich's account of anxiety as a kind of dread of 'nothingness' may give the impression that the concept is an extremely abstract or philosophically recondite one. However, anxiety for Tillich seems to be the dread of disappointment in some concrete expectation depending on oneself. Hence, 'the anxiety of ultimate non-being' is suffered by an individual when he doubts his own ability to legitimise his existence in a world where there is no God or higher principle to provide that legitimacy and to fulfil that 'approving' role. This self-generated legitimacy is what Tillich calls 'self-affirmation' in the face of a threefold threat from 'non-being':

'Non-being threatens man's ontic self-affirmation relatively in terms of fate, absolutely in terms of death. It threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation relatively in terms of emptiness, absolutely in terms of meaninglessness. It threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, absolutely in terms of condemnation.'(2)

Man's 'ontic' self-affirmation is his ability to recognise as reality his own moral, physical and social existence, despite

'the contingency of our temporal being, the fact that we exist in this and in no other time, beginning in a contingent moment, ending in a contingent moment,

filled with experiences which are themselves contingent with respect to quality and quantity.. Fate is the rule of contingency and the anxiety about fate is based on the finite being's awareness of being contingent in every respect, of having no ultimate necessity.. And death stands behind fate and in contingencies not only in the last moment when one is thrown out of existence but in every moment within existence.. It stands behind the insecurity and homelessness of our own social and individual existence.'(3)

That is, man is aware that on every level of his existence he is a product of his circumstances, a kind of cumulative 'accident'. This realisation makes him doubt the viability of the individual reality that he must affirm on his own behalf, a reality which is finally part of no cosmic plan or divine order of things, and which might have been altered unimaginably by whim, error, fluke or impulse on the part of people, and change, freak or deterioration on the part of things.

Man's 'spiritual' self-affirmation involves the search for the purpose and final meaning of his life. For 'courageous' man

'..spiritual self-affirmation occurs in every moment in which man lives creatively.. creative, in this context, has the sense not of original creativity as performed by the genius but of living spontaneously in action and reaction with the contents of one's cultural life.. Such a participation is creative insofar as it changes that in which one

participates, even in very small things..' (4)

Tillich notes that, even with this credo, many still suffer from a consciousness of the ultimate 'emptiness' of their lives, discovering

'in the background of emptiness, meaninglessness, as death lies in the background of the vicissitudes of fate.. the anxiety of meaninglessness is anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual centre, of an answer, however symbolic and indirect, to the question of the meaning of existence.' (5)

Finally, man faces the challenge of 'moral' self-affirmation because

'Man's being is not only given to him but also demanded of him. He is responsible for it; literally, he is required to answer, if he is asked, what he has made of himself. He who asks him is his judge, namely he himself, who, at the same time, stands against him. This situation produces the anxiety which in relative terms is the anxiety of guilt; in absolute terms the anxiety of self-rejection or condemnation.. Man is essentially "finite freedom".. free within the contingencies of his finitude. But within these limits he is asked to make of himself what he is supposed to become, to fulfil his destiny.' (6)

Tillich's account of moral man as '"finite freedom".. free within the contingencies of his finitude' gives us an inkling of the complexities involved in moral self-

affirmation of the kind Tillich describes. Indeed, it is clear that self-affirmation of the kind marked out by Tillich is no easy task. Self-affirmation, says Tillich, involves courage of a special kind: not the courage to do but the courage to be, to legitimise and approve one's own existence. This courage has two sides, because the individual's reality is made up not only of his own experience but also that which he shares with others. Thus, 'the courage to be' is made up of both 'the courage to be as oneself' and 'the courage to be as a part':

'..if courage is defined as the self-affirmation of being in spite of non-being.. man's self-affirmation has two sides.. one is the affirmation of the self as a self; that is, of a separated self-centred self.. It can be called "the courage to be as oneself".

But the self is self only because it has a world, a structured universe, to which it belongs.. The self [may] affirm itself as participant in the power of being as such. Self-affirmation, if it is done in spite of the threat of non-being, is the courage to be. But [here] it is not the courage to be as oneself, it is the "courage to be as a part."'(7)

Noting kinds of participative courage generated by societies either typical of past epochs or ordered according to ideas and principles not generally recognised in the West today(8), Tillich describes the participative courage of 'democratic-conformist' societies such as our own:

'Originally.. the courage to be as a part was in an outspoken way tied up with the idea of progress. The courage to be as a part in the progress of the group to which one belongs, of this nation, of all mankind, is expressed in all specifically American philosophies: pragmatism, process philosophy, the ethics of growth, progressive education, crusading democracy. But this type of courage is not necessarily destroyed if the belief in progress is shaken, as it is today. Progress can mean.. every action in which something is produced beyond what was already given.. The other meaning of progress is a universal, metaphysical law of progressive evolution in which accumulation produces higher and higher forms and values.. A person may have experienced a tragedy, a destructive fate, the breakdown of convictions, even guilt and momentary despair: he feels neither destroyed nor meaningless nor condemned nor without hope.. The productive process in which one is a participant naturally includes risks, failures, catastrophes, but they do not undermine courage.. the modern idea of immortality means a continuous participation in the productive process - "time and world without end". It is not the eternal rest of the individual in God but his unlimited contribution to the dynamics of the universe that gives him the courage to face death.'(9)

The 'courage to be as oneself' in our contemporary setting(10) depends on the adoption of what Tillich calls the 'existential attitude', which views individual reality as something which may not be described but only participated in:

'Existential knowledge is based on an encounter in which new meaning is created and recognised. The knowledge of another person, the knowledge of history, the knowledge of a spiritual creation, religious knowledge - all have existential character. This does not exclude theoretical objectivity on the basis of detachment. But it restricts detachment to one element within the embracing act of cognitive participation. You may have a precise detached knowledge of another person.. but in knowing this you do not know the person, his centred self, his knowledge of himself.. Only in participating in his self.. will you know him.. You must participate in a self in order to know what it is. But by participating you change it. In all existential knowledge both subject and object are transformed by the very act of knowing.'(11)

It is Tillich's conclusion that 'the courage to be' of modern man in the West involves at bottom the reintroduction of the religious impulse:

'Courage needs the power of being, a power transcending the non-being which is experienced in the anxiety of fate or death, which is present in the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, which is effective in the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. The courage which takes this threefold anxiety into itself must be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world. Neither self-affirmation as a part nor self-affirmation as oneself is beyond the manifold threat of non-being. Those who are mentioned as representative of these forms of courage try to transcend themselves and the world in which they participate in order to find the power of being itself and a courage to be which is beyond the threat of non-being. There are no exceptions to this rule;

and this means that every courage to be has openly or covertly a religious root. For religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being itself. In some cases the religious root is carefully covered, in others it is passionately denied; in some it is deeply hidden and in others superficially. But it is never completely absent.'(12)

To sum up, then. Tillich is saying that Western man experiences a profound uncertainty - 'anxiety' - about life. He fears his 'contingency', the fact that were circumstances to be other than they are he would not be the 'same' person and is therefore himself a sort of fragile 'accident'. He fears his lack of a final purpose in life, and the fact that he is ultimately responsible to and for himself. He finds, however, the 'courage to be' (literally the courage to go on living with these doubts) by living, succeeding, failing, dying, as part of a much greater human activity and by accepting his 'malleability' in the face of life through the adoption of what Tillich calls the 'existential' attitude. Ultimately, he elevates his new 'courage to be' to the status of religion or quasi-religion.

Does Tillich's account of man in the West accurately reflect the outlook of the society to which the teacher of English belongs? The account might be criticized in a number of different ways. Some may call for it to be examined in the light of Tillich's political concerns. His wish to reunite culture and religion(13) might be said to lead him to invent convenient anxieties and their ultimately religious remedies. Others may point out that the 'courageous' society he depicts is American society(14) and that he makes unwarranted assumptions about other societies on the basis of this experience. Examining his argument apart from the circumstances in which it was written, it might be said that Tillich discusses man in terms of what man seems to lack compared to men in times past. A different philosophy of man might well emerge were Tillich to focus, like Jung(15), on what man shares with the past. Again, some may argue that people are in fact far less reflective, generally speaking, than Tillich would have us believe - Tillich's worldview is therefore 'overintellectualised'. Such critics may suggest that Tillich's philosophy is as dependent on metaphysics as Whistler's(16) is neglectful of them.

Such criticisms are important and need to be acknowledged. But there is much to be said for considering Tillich's views on a topic which might easily receive crude and conventional treatment. It would for example be simple to account for the balance and stability of Western society by portraying the people who make it up as lacking in sensibility or intuition(17). Tillich's account, however, reconciles that steadiness and lack of apparent philosophical angst with the qualities of insight and awareness that we recognise as typically human. Man does have doubts and anxieties, but has also channels for them and ways of keeping them at bay.

Secondly, Tillich's account is impressive as a theory because of its eclectic character. He puts his faith in no single system of philosophy (a characteristic of existential thought noted by Kaufmann as essential to its successes(18)) and draws contributions from what seem to be appropriate sources, whether from Romanticism and Naturalism or from Idealism.

In the end, however, all the reader need accept is this: 'courageous' man lives his life largely unperturbed by doubts about the meaning and purpose of being alive. This does not mean that he has not the capacity for such

doubts, but rather that he has developed ways of dealing with them so effective as to render the value of life 'self-evident'(19).

In what way does this account of our modern Weltanschauung relate to our notion of the teacher of English as 'hostile consciousness' or 'alien personality'? We noted above that his malaise was most likely spiritual. By examining what is the spiritual outlook of the society he is a part of, we throw his complaint into relief: if he is troubled spiritually then he may well be in some way at odds with the outlook of 'ordinary' people. It may be that he simply finds that outlook intuitively unsatisfactory, but it is also possible that he sees the world differently, in terms competing with those we have discussed. If this is so, what is the source of this alien Weltanschauung, and what is its character? How can it be so powerful as to leave the teacher so spiritually at odds with the world in which he has lived throughout his life? To answer this question we require to view the teacher of English in terms broader than the simply institutional. We must consider forces affecting him intimately and powerfully and permanently, and examine their influence upon him.

If we choose to view the teacher not as a teacher of English but as an erstwhile student of literature, then some light begins to dawn.

'That is the pattern of poetry, the pattern which gives us pleasure because it satisfies the human yearning for order and for completeness. Beneath the pleasure we receive from the verbal music, the sensuous associations of a simile or a metaphor, there lies the deeper pleasure of recognising an affinity. It has been called the perception of the similar in the dissimilar: that will do very well; but the perception would not cause pleasure unless the human mind desired to find order in the external world, and unless the world had an order to satisfy that desire, and unless poetry could penetrate to this order and could image it for us piece by piece. The poetic image is the human mind claiming kinship with everything that lives or has lived, and making good its claim.' CD Lewis: The Poetic Image p.35

If it is indeed the case that the teacher's relationship with 'literature' - that body of work recognised, chiefly by academic critical authority, as being of some absolute and intrinsic value - may cast some light on his malaise, then we will do well to begin with an examination of 'his' literature in the context of Tillich's 'courageous' world.

Tillich's main contention is that man today has managed to conquer 'anxiety' - a kind of radical doubt about the point and purpose of living. Living, taken as a whole, is declared to be its own justification, and involves little mystery. For man today, human experience is explored in the context of ordinary 'humdrum' temporal existence. No questions concerning life's meaning and purpose are asked.

Is there anything in literature, and its philosophy of living, that is not in accord with this outlook? Apparently so. The people in books look like us and talk like us and act like us, but there is conventionally held to be within them and their situations an element of 'radical doubt', a questioning of absolutes, which is foreign to the 'courageous' world. Who are we? Do we matter? 'What is life?', in short, is the issue regularly addressed. In other words, it seems to be at least part of the function of literature to reintroduce the doubts about living that contemporary man in Western society has managed to eliminate or at least comfortably contain(20): belief first in God, then in Progress(21), then finally in Man himself(22) turning the trick. There appears to be between the literary and 'courageous' worlds a sharp difference in Weltanschauung: the way in

which life is understood as much by sense and intuition as by reason.

What happens to us in literature might be said to resemble the fate of certain of the gods of classical times. Just as the reliable gods of glade and field and hearth and home became transfigured as the objects of the mystery cults(23), so in literature the people, actions and offices of everyday life are imbued with a new significance. Literary characters display in their bearing less of our orthodox conviction in the importance of the ephemeral, the routine, the workaday(24), and something of those who have come in touch with intimations of the absolute and their part in it.

Because of this unsettling and in a sense impolitic tendency, 'courageous' society sees fit to 'marginalise' literature. Literature becomes a prominent feature of Education, which is itself firmly set apart from the 'real' world. Since state compulsory education is given over largely to the teaching of 'functional' skills, literature is first studied in its own right in the latter stages of the secondary school, and serves as a major part of the content for certificate courses. (The nihilistic side of twentieth century literature(25) is,

however, little in evidence.) That emerges in the classroom through this literature is a body of egregious characters thrusting out from numinous, suggestive or simply uninspiring backgrounds, demanding in their various ways that life and society be dragged to a standstill and most scrupulously examined. The ordinary, the accepted must be reappraised, not merely with a view to a more equitable redistribution of society's goods, but an evaluation of them according to some absolute standard.

Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, an account of the decline and eventual suicide of failed entrepreneur Willy Loman and his alienation from life and himself, yields the following peroration on behalf of the failed tycoon by his wife:

'I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.'(26)

If we compare this with Tillich's account of the 'courage' that Western man musters so that his existence can be faced with resolution, the sharp difference in

temper is striking:

'A person may have experienced a tragedy, a destructive fate, the breakdown of convictions, even guilt and momentary despair: he feels neither destroyed nor meaningless nor condemned nor without hope.. It is not the eternal rest of the individual in God but his unlimited contribution to the dynamics of the universe that gives him the courage to face death.'(27)

In a sense, the ethos of 'the courage to be' is quite prepared to sweep Willy Loman under the ontological carpet. Too many questions are being asked that cannot be answered or met adequately. Western man is unwilling to address the issue of the Absolute, refuses to make a clear response to doubts about life's meaning and purpose and prefers the 'courageous' 'neo-platitude' outlined above. Willy Loman is, then 'larger than life', or larger than he ought to be if difficulties about the ultimate issues of existence are to be satisfactorily resolved.

From the point of view of Tillich's man, Scott Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby, a weak, childish but charismatic character who dies as an indirect result of a naive and bungled attempt to win the girl of his dreams, is also inconveniently 'larger than life', and Fitzgerald's elegy for Gatsby and his dreams is pointless and unhealthy:

'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter - tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further.. And one fine morning -

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'(28)

Again, the notion that serenity and justification lie entirely in one's 'unlimited contribution to the dynamics of the universe' is challenged by the poetry read in the upper secondary classroom. Philip Larkin's The Whitsun Weddings describes marriage as full of portent of awful meaninglessness in terms of the many couples, newlywed, who board his train for London:

'We hurried towards London, shuffling
gouts of steam.
Now fields were building plots, and
poplars cast
Long shadows over major roads, and for
Some fifty minutes, that in time would
seem

Just long enough to settle hats and say
'I nearly died'
A dozen marriages got under way.
They watched the landscape, sitting side
by side
-An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,
.. and none
Thought of the others they would never
meet
Or how their lives would all contain
this hour.
I thought of London spread out in the
sun

..There we were aimed. And as we raced
across
Bright knots of rail
Past standing Pullmans, walls of
blackened moss

Came close, and it was nearly done, this
frail
Travelling coincidence..'(29)

Larkins's poem, like Auden's below, insists on and cries
out for a meaning to existence that is not simply
cumulative, that can stand on its own account:

'About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they
understood
Its human position; how it takes place
while someone else is eating or opening
a window or just
Walking dully along..

..In Brueghel's Icarus, for instance:
how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the
ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry.
But for him it was not an important
failure.. and the expensive delicate
ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of
the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed
calmly on.'(30)

The existential attitude that makes possible Tillich's
'courage to be as oneself' and which allows that while

'..you may have a precise detached
knowledge of another person.. you do not
know his centred self, his knowledge of
himself. Only in participating in his
self.. will you know him.. But by
participating [in it] you change it..

both subject and object are transformed
by the very act of knowing..' (31)

is also refuted in humane literature. The novel as a genre, stream of consciousness experiments and the like aside(32), could not exist without an idea of character as something relatively fixed and constant. Great Expectations(33) would dissolve without a readily recognisable Pip, and Heathcliff and Cathy in Wuthering Heights(34) would not cohere sufficiently to haunt and puzzle us. Drama, at least as it is conventionally understood, would be similarly affected. Macbeth and Mark Antony and especially Peer Gynt intrigue us because of their many-sidedness - an interest predicated on the assumption that human character or personality enjoys a certain consistency. However, it is in poetry once again that we find the most aggressive assertion of the literary understanding of human character. Dylan Thomas' In My Craft or Sullen Art epitomises a view of life dogmatic about the lack of fundamental ambiguity in experience and human response to it. Lovers are in their most secret essence lovers. To set this essence down is the whole aim of his poetic effort.

'In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms,
I labour by singing light
Nor for ambition or bread

Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart..' (35)

Similarly, Walt Whitman's meditation on his own nature suggests the 'hard', essential and eminently recognisable self:

'Among the men and women the multitude
I perceive one picking me out by secret
and divine signs,
Acknowledging none else, not parent,
wife, husband,
brother, child, any nearer than I am.
Some are baffled, but that one is not -
that one knows me.

Ah lover and perfect equal
I meant that you should discover me so
by faint indirections,
And I when I meet you mean to discover
you by the
like in you..' (36)

Whitman again:

'That shadow my likeness that goes to
and fro seeking
A livelihood, chattering, chaffering..
How often I question and doubt whether
that is really me;
But among my lovers and caroling these
songs,
O I never doubt whether that is really
me.' (37)

Finally, according to Tillich's account, 'the courage to be' (made up of 'the courage to be as a part' and 'the courage to be as oneself') has a religious underpinning. We may observe, however, that the religious element in 'the courage to be' goes very heavily disguised. Western

man has made living itself the end and purpose of existence, and to bring in the principle of transcendence at all seems to vitiate that self-contained credo. Further 'the courage to be' lacks a clear account of right conduct, common to most religions, because 'the productive process' is a neutral idea meaning simply 'continuous participation' and 'naturally includes risks, failures and catastrophes'.

The temper of literature, however, may much more readily be defined as religious. We may consider its quest for the meaning of existence, and insistence on the firm reality of the individual, as evidence of this. These features provide a strong basis for an account of right conduct - everything that happens matters in itself and there is a fixed someone to take responsibility in the full sense. The eschatology of such a religion would involve a critical account of exactly what man had made of himself. All this provides an opportunity for fervour and involvement on the part of the believer.

In terms of its political circumstances the religion of literature enjoys two further advantages. First of all, the 'evangelising' agency is the secondary school in its latter stages. Those who hear the word are the young, often extremely idealistic and already sharply aware of

an apparent lack of 'point' to the adult world. The idea of a direct, unambiguous credo, militant in its insistence on meaning and purpose, has an understandable appeal. Secondly, this new religion is patently rejected by 'courageous' society, which looks down on it as wild and impractical. To pursue literature further, to study it or even at some later stage transmit it, will provide little in the way of material reward. Thus is provided an element of world resignation and sacrifice likely to enthuse the literary acolyte. This sacrificial undercurrent bubbles to the surface in the warning Whitman receives from the book he holds open in his hands:

'Whoever you are holding me now in hand,
Without one thing all will be useless,
I give you fair warning before you
attempt me further;
I am not what you supposed, but far
different.

Who is he that would become my follower?
Who would sign himself a candidate for
my affections?

The way is suspicious, the result
uncertain, perhaps destructive,
You would have to give up all else, I
alone would expect
to be your sole and exclusive standard,
Your novitiate would even then be long
and exhausting,

The whole past theory of your life and
all conformity to the lives around you
would have to be abandon'd,
Therefore release me now before
troubling yourself any
further, let go your hand from my

shoulders,
Put me down and depart on your way.'

Circumscribed also by this religion is the sense of
divine mystery:

'But these leaves conning you con at
peril,
For these leaves and me you will not
understand,
They will elude you at first and still
more afterward, I will
certainly elude you
..Already you see I have escaped from
you.'

Present too, as we might by now expect, is the element of
privileged communication with the Absolute:

'..in any roof'd room of a house I
emerge not, nor in company,
And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a
gawk, or unborn, or dead..
But just possibly with you on a high
hill, first watching
lest any person for miles around
approach unawares,
or possibly with you sailing at sea, or
on the beach of
the sea or some quiet island,
Here to put your lips upon mine I permit
you
..For I am the new husband and I am the
comrade.'(38)

Hence, the ingredients for an inspired sort of 'heresy'
are present. We might expect some who hear it in the
classroom to reject it, but it is not unreasonable to
suppose that there are those who will accept it and
identify with it(39). It is many of these people, I

suggest, who will represent the teacher of English in the secondary classroom in years to come. It must be made clear before going further that all we are saying about teachers of English is that they respond to the peculiar impulse of humane literature. This is not to say that they are necessarily alike any more than are adherents to any other religion(40). What we are suggesting is that they recognise a desideratum in 'courageous' man's account of life. They respond to literature as a medium through which demands for meaning and purpose in living are addressed. They are, then, the bearers of the 'radical doubt' the 'courageous' world has done its best to forget. They choose to exercise(41) what others choose to exorcise(42) and pursue thereby illumination.

Thus, the student of literature who becomes the teacher of English in our schools is an important and potentially destructive element of society: he is the agent of our worst and most pernicious enemy - anxiety, 'radical doubt'. Yet, for all that, his presence in our schools appears to provoke in his pupils no fundamental questioning of the 'courageous' world and its values. In fact, what we have described as his religious worldview is scarcely apparent. What combination of circumstances results in his demeanour as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness', spiritually adrift in the

secondary school, owing no obvious allegiance to creed of any kind? To further our knowledge, we resort again to the imagination, and to analogy.

'Once upon a time there was.. "A King!" my small readers will exclaim. No.. you are mistaken. Once upon a time there was a piece of wood.

..I can't say how it happened, but the fact is that one fine day this piece of wood happened to be in the shop of an old carpenter.. As soon as [he] saw the piece of wood, he.. took his sharp hatchet and was going to.. trim it into shape. But just as he raised the hatchet to strike the first blow, he paused with his hand in the air for he heard a tiny, tiny voice which said warningly:

"Don't strike me too hard!"'(43)

Like the abrupt comic sentience of the block of wood which is to become Pinocchio, the radically-doubting new nature of the individual enthused by literature must come as a great surprise to those around him. He grows up like anyone else, becomes accustomed to the norms and standards of the world he is a part of. He looks like everyone else.. then suddenly words pour out which seem, like those of the block of wood ultimately to become a Real Boy, astoundingly presumptuous! In raising the

issues of meaning and purpose, his understanding of the world seems to be out of all proportion with his ability to influence the world: he is a schoolboy who has not experienced life and yet passes judgement on it. The block of wood that speaks when it has no business to and the pupil who questions the 'courageous' view of life are as apparently absurd as Holden Caulfield, in Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, who quizzes taxi-drivers about one of the details of existence in New York:

'Then I thought of something all of a sudden. "Hey, listen," I said, "You know those ducks in that lagoon right next Central Park South? That little lake? By any chance, do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over? Do you happen to know, by any chance?" I realised it was only one chance in a million. He turned around and looked at me like I was a madman.

"What're you trying to do bud?" he said..
"Kid me?"'(44)

Hence, the odds seem to be stacked against the acolyte of literature, and these odds are worth listing if we are to grasp the essence of his experience in the 'courageous' world he is functionally still a part of. First of all, the world he looks out on, after he succumbs to the radical doubt inherent in literature, is 'fairy-tale simple' - uncomplicated and untroubled in its ends. It is a practical world and quite unmagical. It believes in

a world in which things will not do themselves: where wood must be chopped and tables built, and this is the point of living. For the acolyte of literature, however, this world could be made magical, if people would stop and reflect and consider and imagine, and through this approach the significance and purport of life. Unsupported, he is put to attempting to inject the magical element himself, becoming in the unmagical fairy-tale simple world the blackbird that speaks or the deer that turns into a princess or the block of wood which cries out in mock fright. Whether he has it within him to carry through his aim is another matter. In Kierkegaard's terms(45), he has neither the immanent authority of a genius, whose authority is on account of himself, nor the transcendent authority of an apostle, whose authority is due to direct divine revelation. The acolyte of literature is simply a follower who feels himself brushed by something greater than himself. The acolyte may, then, be seen as alienated from his old 'courageous' world, yet fragile on the frontier of his new world. He is less a crusader than he is a sprite. It is not unreasonable to locate his eventual defeat at the hands of the 'courageous' world in this fact.

- But to return..

'Gepetto lived in a little room on the ground floor that was lighted by a window under the stairs. His furniture could not have been simpler. A rickety chair, a shaky bed, and a broken down table.

At the back of the room a fireplace could be seen, with the fire lighted; but the fire was painted, and over the fire was a painted kettle which was boiling merrily, and sending forth a cloud of steam that was just like real steam.

As soon as he came home, Gepetto took his tools and began to carve his marionette. "What shall I call him?" he said to himself. I think I will call him Pinocchio. The name will bring him good luck - I once knew a whole family of Pinocchios: there was Pinocchio the father, and Pinocchia the mother, and Pinocchii the children, and they all got along splendidly. The richest of them was a beggar."

When he had thought of a name for his marionette, he set to work with a will. He made his hair, and his forehead, and his eyes in a very short time. As soon as the eyes were finished, imagine his amazement when he saw them move and look at him intently. When Gepetto saw those two wooden eyes watching him, he didn't like it at all, and he said crossly: "Naughty wooden eyes, why are you looking at me?"

But no one answered.'(46)

The communicant in the church of literature is not appalled simply by what is from his standpoint the deceitfully uncomplicated outlook of the 'courageous' world. He is appalled by what appears to be its sheer lack of spiritual aspiration. It will make do, so to

speak, with a painted fire and a painted kettle and believe that the painted cloud of steam that it sends forth is 'just like real steam'. From the point of view of the acolyte of humane literature, it is as if the whole world sees real objects and people and situations as if they have no more depth than their representations in strip cartoons. The 'courageous' world appears to approve a kind of limited 'psychotic' view of things, where everything that matters is treated as a toy of no great consequence, but is preserved on good-humoured principle. The acolyte is as shocked by its acceptance of 'mundane' consciousness when it might attain to the 'sublime' as we are sympathetically amused at Gepetto's definition of a fortunate family 'the richest of [whom] was a beggar'.

Why does the acolyte of literature not make known his disaffection? The puppet whose 'naughty wooden eyes' look boldly at his father fails to reply to his question because his mouth is not made as yet. The acolyte of literature cannot reply because he is unable to express himself in terms that his 'courageous' world would understand. The acolyte's brow may be carved, but because it is made of wood no Olympian offspring can emerge full-blown from it, as from Jupiter's. He cannot force upon his world a consciousness of itself. His

position is beyond despair, because while the acolyte of literature has, in Spengler's terms,

'..the Faustian's picture of himself.. as a force endlessly combatting obstacles. His version of the course of individual life is that of an inner development, and the catastrophes of existence come as the inevitable culmination of his past experiences. Conflict is the essence of existence. Without it, personal life has no meaning, and only the more superficial values of existence can be attained..'

- the world with which he finds himself at odds does not embrace the opposing philosophy of the Apollonian, who

'conceived of his soul "as a cosmos ordered in a group of excellent parts".. The idea of an inward development of personality was alien to him, and he saw life as under the shadow of catastrophe always brutally threatening from outside..' (47)

For, as we have already seen, 'courageous' man prefers to avoid the issues of existence, satisfying himself with the idea that living is its own justification. It is impossible to meaningfully oppose or defeat him. If the image of the Faustian is Epstein's head of Conrad, and that of the Apollonian the serene blindness of a Greek statue, the image of 'courageous' man is curiously like the following:

'She had expected an old man with the shakes but what she saw was a man in his thirties.. his skin was dark, rucked deeply about the mouth like the seams on a boat, and his eyes were brown. His smile was bare amorousness. It was his only smile, but she didn't know this. He would smile amorously at his shovel, amorously into his whisky glass, amorously into the hole he had dug, and when it was time to go home he would smile amorously at the ignition switch on his car.'(48)

The marionette Pinocchio is no more satisfied with his situation than is our acolyte of literature and, as soon as his legs and feet are made, deserts Gepetto and his cottage with its painted comforts, just as our acolyte resigns at least emotionally and intellectually from the world of his father. But this step is a big one, and has its difficulties, as Pinocchio discovers upon making a secret visit back to his father's cottage:

'When [Pinocchio] got home, he found the door ajar. Pushing it open, he went in, and locked it securely after him. Then.. he heard someone in the room saying:

"Cri-cri-cri!"

"Who is calling me?" said Pinocchio in a fright.

"It is I."

Pinocchio turned and saw a large cricket crawling slowly up the wall.

"Speak to me, Cricket: who are you?"

"I am the Talking Cricket and I have lived in this room for more than a hundred years."

"But today this is my room, and you will oblige me by going away immediately without ever looking behind you."

"I shall not leave this place," replied the Cricket, "until I have told you a very unpleasant truth.. woe to those children who rebel against their parents, and who run away from their homes. They will not be happy in this world and, sooner or later, they will repent it bitterly."

..At these last words Pinocchio lost his temper entirely. He seized a mallet from the bench and threw it at the Cricket. Perhaps he did not intend to hit him, but the mallet struck him right on the head. The poor Cricket had only time to cry "cri-cri-cri", and there he was stretched out stiff, but still clinging to the wall.'(49)

What Pinocchio encounters in the darkness of the cottage is, of course, his conscience. It tells him that he has strayed from the straight and narrow and can expect to suffer for it in the future. But while the ethics the puppet struggles with are the relatively simple ones of consanguinity, the acolyte of literature is faced with his world's argument on right conduct. It is significant that here we have the introduction of the censorious element missing so far from Pinocchio's fairy-tale simple world - the Talking Cricket, who has lived for a hundred years in the cottage. Just as the block of wood conjured magic into the story by crying out in alarm, thus

introducing a new and frightening philosophy into the 'courageous' world, so the Cricket's longevity and ability to speak and moralise indicates that our puppet and acolyte is now confronted with his world's essential character. This voice of conscience, however, does not take the form of an angel or Good Fairy. It takes the form of an insect, Kafka's symbol of most profound alienation. Gregor Samsa, in Metamorphosis,

'awoke one morning from uneasy dreams [to find] himself transformed into a gigantic insect. He was lying on his hard, as it were armour-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his dome-like brown belly divided into stiff, arched segments.. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes.'(50)

As we have said, what is striking about Pinocchio's conscience is that it is represented by the 'traditional' symbol of alienation, an insect. For the acolyte of literature it is the norms of his old world, rather than he himself, that are despicable and somehow inhuman.

Thus, the acolyte may with conviction turn from his Cricket-conscience, while Pinocchio can only turn away in pique, for the acolyte of literature is determined to make life account for itself without resort to vague 'cosmic' explanation. However, for the acolyte as much

as for Pinocchio the Cricket remains clinging to the wall of consciousness. The acolyte cannot sever all links with his old life, and the Cricket will, as we shall see in the chapters following, return to trouble him again.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND THE UNIVERSITY

'Be patient; put your heart to school;
Weep if you will, but not despair;
The trust that nought goes wrong by rule
Should ease the load the many bear.'
Coventry Patmore: The Angel In The House
Book 2 Canto 5

'I am a very remarkable Rocket, and come
of remarkable parents. My mother was
the most celebrated Catherine Wheel of
her day. My father was a Rocket like
myself, and of French extraction. He
flew so high that people were afraid
that he would never come down again..

..But the Catherine Wheel shook her
head.

"Romance is dead,
Romance is dead,
Romance is dead,"
she murmured.'

Oscar Wilde: The Remarkable Rocket

What we have attempted so far is an account of the world as we ordinarily find it, and an examination of the acolyte of literature's spiritual relationship with that world. What follows will involve not so much new ideas as a further perspective on those advanced thus far. Hence, we return to trace the acolyte's progress in the 'courageous' world.

Once free of school, and by now sharply alienated from the 'courageous' world's outlook on life, the acolyte looks about him for an occupation. Since his capacity for radical doubt is not valued by the 'courageous' world, he feels he has no philosophic option other than to continue his studies in higher education, and this usually means the taking of a University degree. It might seem at first that this is just what the acolyte needs to strengthen him in his purpose, the breaking of the dam of radical doubt built by man in the West, who in the acolyte's eyes demeans himself by preferring custom to truth(1). Surely in the University, with a 'church' of like-minded scholars around him, the acolyte's conviction of the importance of his as yet unrealised world can only increase. The University, then, would be the seed-bed of a new 'literary' consciousness which would challenge directly the unexamined assumptions of

the 'courageous' society which provides it. This, certainly, is the stock liberal-humanist argument for the necessity of the academic University(2). Yet it is precisely this assumption which our account of the teacher of English will challenge, although this will not in principle be anything new, given the Marxist interpretation of Universities and their relationship with and function in terms of society, an interpretation which suggests that the academic climate of the Universities does not so much encourage free and critical thought as serve to legitimise on the highest level the assumptions conventionally supposed to be under examination.

How does this come about in the case of the University student of literature? After all, as we have said, his radically-doubting outlook has come about in the first place as a result of his school exposure to literature. Literature's insistence on a meaning to existence that is not simply 'cumulative', its further insistence on the essentially 'fixed' reality of the individual, created his stance. How may the further study of literature now undermine it in favour of 'courageous' orthodoxy? The answer to this is the Marxist account of the University-world relationship in stranger, spiritual terms: it comes about through the application of 'courageous' ideas and

assumptions about life to the understanding and appreciation of literature. We shall attempt to sketch this process in what follows.

The message which the University has for the 'religious' student of literature is essentially this: far from being in radical opposition to it, literature is philosophically in agreement with 'the courage to be'. Before outlining this apparently unlikely reconciliation, let us briefly restate both positions and their differences.

According to Tillich, the 'courageous' world avoids anxiety of an ontological, spiritual and moral kind by endorsing the idea that human existence, whatever its quality, is justified or legitimised by 'a universal metaphysical law of progressive evolution(3), in which accumulation produces higher and higher forms and values'. This account of the world is substantiated by what Tillich calls an 'existential' attitude towards the nature of the individual, whose self is not fixed or immutable. In having a 'detached' knowledge of an individual 'you do not know the person.. only in participating in his self will you know him.. But by

participating you change it'. With such a concept of the individual, the idea of the importance of individual experience - which is only a fragment of the 'evolutionary' whole - recedes.

Literature places, however, a special value on individual experience, and insists that it has a significance in itself, without reference to the big picture of human striving. In support of this view of existence, literature presents us with an account of the individual as a fixed, unchangeable essence, character or personality. This view of existence is a threat to the 'courage to be' insofar as it reintroduces the element of anxiety or radical doubt about the meaning and purpose of human existence which the 'accumulative-evolutionary' account of life had successfully banished.

The University, in its role as the ultimate legitimiser of the 'courageous' world's values and outlook, appears to have a formidable task on its hands, first of all because it is being called upon to deal not with a minor or eccentric 'heresy' but a schism with its origins in fundamental doctrine, and secondly because the schismatics - the acolytes of literature - are committed to a doctrine which is, for them, emotionally more attractive than orthodox doctrine. The University's

method of reclaiming the heretic-schismatics is to reinterpret their heretical position in the following way.

First, it suggests an account of man that seems consistent with a rejection of 'courageous' doctrine and with an emphasis on the importance of 'fragmented' or discrete experience and existence. It suggests to the student of literature that man is what we shall term 'great-souled': that he is complex, and capable emotionally and intellectually of many different (and often contradictory) things. A sophisticated understanding of literature, the University argues, shows that man's claim for justification in 'non-accumulative' terms is because he does indeed possess a real character, but this character has much more to it than the acolyte of literature has thus far imagined. Hence, on the pretext of exploring what has come to be known as the human condition, the University elaborates in systematic fashion on the 'complex' nature of man, establishing what are in effect philosophic categories of his complexity.

Second, the University tends to focus on those aspects of man's makeup that are implicitly pessimistic. While it is not our chief aim here to list all the aspects stressed, we may readily identify several of the most

important, which contribute eventually to the exploding of the student's literary credo. Combined, these aspects of man are presented to the student as evidence of man's 'great-souled' nature - which the student has allowed as an apparently logical development of his own belief in the significance of individual man - and as an argument for man's necessary place within 'courageous' philosophy.

These aims are achieved, as we have said, by the University's tacit endorsement of an almost nihilistic model of man. In the University's account of human character, stress is placed on the following human impulses and tendencies. First, there is a strong emphasis on man's irrationality and perversity, a doctrinal point enshrined, like those to follow, in a classic statement of pessimistic existential philosophy. Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground begins in just this vein:

'I am a sick man. I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. I believe my liver is diseased. However, I know nothing at all about my disease, and do not know for certain what ails me. I don't consult a doctor for it, and never have, though I have a respect of medicine and doctors. Besides, I am extremely superstitious, sufficiently so to respect medicine, anyway. No, I refuse to consult a doctor from spite. That you probably will not understand. Well, I understand it, though.. of course, I can't explain who it is precisely that I am mortifying in this

case by my spite. I am perfectly aware that I cannot "pay out" the doctors by not consulting them; I know better than any one that by all this I am only injuring myself and no one else. But still, if I don't consult a doctor it is from spite. My liver is bad, well - let it get worse!'(4)

The identification of and dilation on this element of irrational perversity in man is an important indication of a 'maturing' understanding of literature, so far as the University is concerned. Such perversity is, for example, a marked characteristic of Hamlet and his hesitation in avenging the murder of his father. He burns with unavenged wrong and insult - yet for so long takes no action(5). It is a profound insight to attribute this quality to George Orwell's Winston Smith who, taking studied precaution to avoid discovery of his 'thoughtcrime' by the Party, buys a diary and commits his subversive ideas to it(6). Irrational perversity is the 'instinct' Conrad's Mr Kurtz succumbs to in Heart of Darkness, when he becomes the horrid god of the 'savages' he sets out to civilise in the name of his mercantile employers(7). It is this same impulse which attracts Larkin to the fringes of the dance floor he professes to despise:

'The trumpet's voice, loud and
authoritative,
Draws me a moment to the lighted glass
To watch the dancers - all under twenty-
five -

Shifting intently, face to flushed face,
Solemnly on the beat of happiness.

..But not for me, nor I for them; and so
With happiness.
Therefore I stay outside,
Believing this; and they maul to and
fro,
Believing that; and both are satisfied,
If no one has misjudged himself. Or
lied.'(8)

The second aspect of the University's nihilistic account of man is his tendency towards mysticism. Dostoevsky will only be happy with a moral code the following of which gives full expression to man's nature. He describes his unattainable ideal in terms of

'...a palace of crystal that can never be destroyed - a palace at which one will not be able to put out one's tongue or make a long nose on the sly.. that is my choice, my desire.. The palace of crystal may be an idle dream, it may be that it is inconsistent with the laws of nature and that I have invented it only through my own stupidity.. That makes no difference, since it exists in my desires, or rather exists as long as my desires exist. Perhaps you are laughing again? Laugh away; I will put up with any mockery rather than pretend that I am satisfied when I am hungry. I know anyway, that I will not be put off with a compromise, with a recurring zero, simply because it is consistent with the laws of nature and actually exists.'(9)

This impulse may be identified in Hamlet's famous meditation on the relative merits of mundane existence and the possible unguessed satisfactions of a state of

tranquil non-being. It may be noted, too, in a more ideal and experimental sense, in Robert Frost's After Apple-Picking:

'My long two-pointed ladder's sticking
through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my
sight
I got from looking through a pane of
glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking
trough
And held against the world of hoary
grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well upon my way to sleep
before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to
take..' (10)

The mystic sense in man is held to manifest itself in either wild ideals, such as Dostoevsky's, or the sense of the inchoate that comes across in Frost's poem. Added then to the student's understanding is a third aspect of nihilistic man, his sense of his ultimate 'homelessness', or alienation from the ordinary circumstances of life. This is exemplified by Dostoevsky's envy of the workmen he sees in the street, who take their place, however ignominious, in the world:

'When workmen have finished their work they do at least receive their pay, they go to the tavern, then they are taken to the police-station - and there is occupation for a week. But where can man go? Anyway, one can observe a certain awkwardness about him when he has attained such objects. He loves the process of attaining, but does not quite like to have attained, and that, of course, is very absurd. In fact, man is a comical creature; there seems to be a kind of jest in it all. But yet mathematical certainty is, after all, something insufferable.. I admit that twice two makes four is an excellent thing, but if we are to give everything its due, twice two makes five is sometimes a very charming thing too.'(11)

This sense of 'homelessness' may be identified in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, wherein it is not simply the pathetic Jimmy Gatz who is out of place, but almost every character in the novel: Nick Carraway, the narrator, is an 'innocent' from the West out of place in the sophisticated East; Tom Buchanan holds drunken parties in a New York flat kept for his mistress, the wife of a garage-owner on the outskirts of town; Daisy Buchanan has her assignations with her lover in a house belonging to neither of them(12). In Burgess' A Clockwork Orange(13) the violence and mayhem is the result of the alienation of the young from society.. even the verbal fencing in Jane Austen's novels(14) is attributable at least in part to the estrangement of the sexes from each other. Cesare Pavese located this

isolation in the human capacity to wish, dream or desire:

'Any fervour.. brings with it the tendency to feel that there is a predetermined law in life, a law which punishes those who abuse or ignore that particular fervour. A state of passion.. can so change the very structure and spirit of one's universe that any setback seems to imply a breakdown of the vital balance of that all-pervading passion. Then.. a man feels either that he has gone too far in his zeal or fallen short. Usually he feels that he has been deliberately punished by the law of that passion and of the universe.'(15)

The fourth aspect of nihilistic man is the pleasure he takes in suffering, or so at any rate asserts Dostoevsky:

'And why are you so firmly, so triumphantly convinced that only the normal and the positive.. is for the advantage of man? Is not reason in error as regards advantage? Does not man, perhaps, love something besides well-being? Perhaps he is just as fond of suffering? Perhaps suffering is just as great a benefit to him as well-being? Man is sometimes extraordinarily, passionately, in love with suffering, and that is a fact.. As far as my personal opinion is concerned, to care only for well-being seems positively ill-bred. Whether it's good or bad, it is sometimes very pleasant, too, to smash things. I hold no brief for suffering nor for well-being either. I am standing for.. my caprice, and for its being granted to me when necessary. Suffering would be out of place in vaudevilles, for instance, I know that, in the "Palace of Crystal" it is unthinkable; suffering means doubt, negation, and what would be the good of a "palace of crystal" if there could be any doubt about it? And yet I think man

will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction.'(16)

This principle of suffering, the student is given to understand, partly accounts for Hamlet's delay in avenging his father. It accounts for the otherwise impenetrable Alan Strang in Schaffer's Equus(17). It explains Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape, in which an 'old' man torments himself with tape-recorded accounts of thoughts and feelings from his younger days:

'Just been listening to an old year, passages at random; I did not check it in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago.. Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! And the resolutions! Sneers at what he calls his youth and thanks to God that it's over..' (18)

The fascination self-torment holds for man can even be understood on a cosmic, Nietzschean scale:

'God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.. We have killed him - you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun?.. Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not

become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning?.. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves?.. Who will wipe the blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it?'(19)

These four nihilistic aspects of man constitute what is presented by the University to the student of literature as the 'great-souled' human nature that he has allowed as a logical development of his belief in the significance of individual existence. It should be clear by now that all these aspects of man militate against the coherence of character or essence which supports what the student sees as literature's demands for an account of meaning and purpose in life. If man is irrational, or perverse, he is less 'recognisable' in his actions. If he is mystical in the way we have employed the term, no outlook becomes less intelligible or coherent. If he is 'homeless' or alienated, what we see of him cannot be his real or characteristic self. If he likes to hurt himself then our knowledge of his nature becomes less reliable. Certainly it is not impossible to accommodate these features of man's being within the literary concept of character, but this requires not only extreme sophistication on the part of the student that he has

scarcely had the time or experience to acquire, but also the intellectual independence to accept with reservation ideas legitimised by so powerful an agency as the University and made valid currency in the marketplace of academic thought.

To these obstacles and uncertainties must be added the spiritual difficulties of the acolyte of literature in the 'courageous' world he is first a part of. There are the remnants of what we have called his 'Cricket-conscience' (the 'courageous' Weltanschauung he finds repellent but still with some claim on him). There is the fact that his Faustian mentality finds no direct Apollonian opposition, and therefore no purchase, in the 'courageous' world. There is the fact that he is a follower or acolyte of the 'church' of humane literature rather than its apostle, and therefore lacks the grand vision, in spiritual terms, to communicate his ideas to the 'courageous' world.

Because of all this, the student is brought around to accept that 'great-souled' man is not so coherent a creature after all. He is confusing, self-contradictory, inexplicable to the extent that to refute the truth or value of the 'courage to be' on his account would be absurd. How can the literary claims for the moral

significance of living be made when they are predicated on so inconsistent and unpredictable an individual personality? No, 'great-souled' man must still take refuge within 'the courage to be', where the meaning of existence lies in the 'universal, metaphysical law of progressive evolution'. Through this, all the 'particles' of human experience, meaningless on their own, combine to find an ultimate legitimacy. A further reference to Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground provides explicit statement of what is tacitly provided for the student of literature as his revised account of man:

'I have been going on like that for a long time - twenty years. Now I am forty. I used to be in the government service, but am no longer. I was a spiteful official. I was rude and took pleasure in being so. I did not take bribes, you see, so I was bound to find a recompense in that, at least.. But do you know, gentlemen, what was the chief point about my spite? Why.. I was inwardly conscious with shame that I was not only not a spiteful but not even an embittered man, that I was simply scaring sparrows at random and amusing myself by it. I might foam at the mouth, but bring me a doll to play with, give me a cup of tea with sugar in it, and maybe I should be appeased.. In reality I could never become spiteful. I was conscious every moment in myself of many, very many elements opposite to that. I felt them positively swarming in me, these opposite elements. I knew that they had been swarming in me all my life and craving some outlet from me, but I would not let them.. come out. They tormented me to convulsions.. It was not only that I could not become spiteful, I did not know how to become

anything: neither spiteful nor kind, neither a rascal nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect. Now, I am living out my life in my corner, taunting myself with the spiteful and useless consolation that an intelligent man cannot become anything seriously, and it is only the fool who becomes anything. Yes, a man in the nineteenth century must and morally ought to be pre-eminently a characterless creature; a man of character, an active man, is pre-eminently a limited creature.'(20)

The University-inculcated revised perspective on literature results in the student becoming a bemused apostate from his 'anti-courageous' literary religion. The experience is accompanied by knowledge and skills held to be of value in the academic world, and there has been no sense of persecution in the process which has unfolded almost like life itself. The student's spiritual experience of his progress towards apostasy is a curious one: it involves the invalidation of an outlook precious to the student by a procedure which he does not find particularly unpleasant and to which he makes no resistance, because of his respect for the authority of the University. He experiences no crisis at the time, and if he feels anything at all it is a dim and sober sense of his own 'maturity' among kind and intelligent mentors. The essence of what he feels is summed up in Hans Christian Andersen's tale of a false maturity, The Snow

Queen, and it is through this that our grasp of the student's spiritual experience becomes firm:

'All right, we will start the story; when we come to the end we shall know more than we do now.

Once upon a time there was a troll, the most evil troll of them all; he was called the devil. One day he was particularly pleased with himself, for he had invented a mirror which had the strange power of being able to make anything good or beautiful that it reflected appear horrid; and all that was evil and worthless seem attractive and worthwhile. "It is a very amusing mirror," said the devil.

But the most amusing part of it all was that if a good or a kind thought passed through anyone's mind the most horrible grin would appear on the face of the mirror.

It was so entertaining that the devil himself laughed out loud. All the little trolls who went to troll school, where the devil was headmaster, said that a miracle had taken place.. At last they decided to fly up to heaven to poke fun at the angels and God himself.. The nearer they came to heaven, the harder the mirror laughed.. then shook so violently from laughter that they lost their grasp; it fell and broke into hundreds of millions of billions and some odd pieces.

It was then that it really caused trouble, much more than it ever had before. Some of the splinters were as tiny as grains of sand and just as light, so that they were spread by the winds all over the world. When a sliver like that entered someone's eye it stayed there; and the person, forever after, would see the world distorted, and only be able to see the faults, and not the virtues, of everyone around

him.. If a splinter should enter
someone's heart.. that heart would turn
to ice.'(21)

The devil's mirror, of course, is the glass the student looks through to gain the nihilistic perspective which makes 'courageous' philosophy appear the only sane approach to life. However, the sense of danger that the student experiences in doing so is strangely muted, just as the devil and his school, representing the University, are uncommonly amusing fellows. The devil is not a demon in the serious and profound and destructive sense. He is simply 'the most evil troll of them all', and the mirror he creates - the nihilistic perspective on literature - is a nuisance rather than a threat, until we are soberly informed of its power, spread out on the four winds, to distort the perspective and emotions of the person unlucky enough to get a sliver or speck in his eye or in his heart. But by then the mood of the story is curiously set, and it is hard for the reader, as it is hard for the student of literature reaping the lucubration of scholars, to properly appreciate the moral seriousness of the situation.

But to return:

'In a big city.. in winter.. the windows
were tightly closed and sometimes they
would be covered by ice. Then the
little children would heat copper coins

on the stove and press them against the glass until the roundest of holes would melt in the ice; through each of these peeped the loveliest little eye: one belonged to a little boy and the other to a little girl. His name was Kai and hers was Gerda..

..that night, as Kai was getting undressed, he climbed up on the chair by the window and looked out through his peephole. It was snowing gently; one of the flakes fell on the edge of the wooden box and stayed there; other snowflakes followed and they grew until they took the shape of a woman.. She was beautiful but all made of ice: cold, blindingly glittering ice; and yet she was alive, for her eyes stared at Kai like two stars, but neither rest nor peace was to be found in her gaze. She nodded towards the window and beckoned. The little boy got so frightened that he jumped down from his chair; and at that moment a shadow crossed the window as if a big bird had flown by.'(22)

The student's outlook on 'courageous' society is similar to little Kai's apprehension of the Snow Queen, before the slivers from the devil's mirror have entered his heart and eye. Kai in his innocent state sees the Snow Queen as enormous and sculptured and glittering and frightening, just as the acolyte of literature sees and shudders at the monolithic and anonymous 'universal, metaphysical law of progressive evolution, in which accumulation of existences and experiences produces higher and higher forms and values'. The uninstructed student can see in the philosophy of 'courage' the same absence of peace that Kai finds in the gaze of the

splendid Snow Queen. However, once Kai has been penetrated by the slivers from the mirror, he sees the Snow Queen, on their next encounter, in a quite different light:

'Kai looked at the Snow Queen; he could not imagine that anyone could have a wiser or more beautiful face; and she no longer seemed to be made of ice, as she had when he first saw her outside his window, the time she had beckoned to him. In his eyes she now seemed utterly perfect, nor did he feel any fear. He told her that he knew his multiplication tables, could figure in fractions, and knew the area in square miles of every country in Europe, and what its population was. The Snow Queen smiled, and somehow Kai felt that he did not know enough.'(23)

Now Kai no longer sees the Snow Queen as an alien being, but merely one more elevated. 'She no longer seemed to be made of ice.. as she had when he first saw her outside his window..' Similarly, once introduced to the nihilistic perspective on literature, the student resigns himself to seeing literature in academic terms, and thinks of it only as a discipline rather than a credo for living. He is now more concerned with what he knows about literature than with what it tells him, just as Kai's first impulse upon meeting the beautiful Snow Queen again is to tell her 'that he knew his multiplication tables, could figure in fractions, and knew the area in square miles of every country in Europe and what its

population was'. The student, like Kai, has been led painlessly towards his new perspective - the slivers of the mirror are, after all, too tiny to be felt. He accepts the fact of his ignorance with regard to this new discipline of literature, and strives to remedy this, just as Kai in the presence of the Snow Queen feels that he too does not know enough.

Upon which he is driven off in a majestic sled to the palace of the Snow Queen.

"The walls of the palace were made of snow, and the windows and doors of the sharp winds; it contained more than a hundred halls, the largest several miles long. All were lighted by the sharp glare of the Northern lights; they were huge, empty and terrifyingly cold.. The Northern lights burned so precisely that you could tell to the very second when they would be at their highest and their lowest points. In the middle of that enormous snow hall was a frozen lake. It was cracked into thousands of pieces and every one of them was shaped exactly like all the others. In the middle of the lake was the throne of the Snow Queen. Here she sat when she was at home. She called the lake the Mirror of Reason, and declared that it was the finest and only mirror in the world.

Little Kai was blue - indeed, almost black - from the cold; but he did not feel it, for the Snow Queen had kissed all feelings of coldness out of him.. He sat arranging and rearranging pieces of ice into patterns. He called this the Game of Reason.. and because of the splinters in his eyes, he thought what he was doing was of great importance, although it was no different from

playing with wooden blocks, which he had done when he could hardly talk.

He wanted to put the pieces of ice together in such a way that they formed a certain word, but he could not remember exactly what that word was. The word that he could not remember was "eternity". The Snow Queen had told him that if he could place the pieces of ice so that they spelled that word, then he would be his own master and she would give him the whole world and a new pair of skates; but however much he tried he couldn't do it.'(24)

The appalling picture that we have of Kai installed in the ice-palace of the Snow Queen symbolises the situation of the student-apostate once his academic education is concluded. Now seeing literature in its 'true' nihilistic light, he accords it importance merely as an academic discipline rather than a meaning-demanding credo, and accepts his place in the 'courageous' world explained by the universal, metaphysical, accumulative law which insists that man should not concern himself overly with the pursuit of meaning, purpose or justification. The ice-palace represents the cold law of the 'courageous' world. The Mirror of Reason stands for the student's new attitude toward literature, which he is encouraged to think is 'the finest and only mirror in the world'. However, the student is still unable quite to reconcile his new 'courageous' perspective on life with the 'anti-courageous' impulse towards the better

understanding of himself that still remains within him, just as Kai, whatever he does, cannot make the blocks of ice in the Game of Reason spell the word 'eternity'. Like Kai, the student feels that he will gain 'the whole world and a new pair of skates' should he manage to do this, but again like Kai he is quite unable to.

We said earlier that the process of perspective adjustment undergone by the student in his University education is essentially painless. We might say that he feels nothing when he undergoes the process that leads him indirectly back to the philosophy of meaning-avoiding 'courage' because he has had all feelings of coldness kissed out of him along the way(25).

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

'Community in sin is unstable: it soon disintegrates into an anarchy of hatred, all against all.'

Dorothy L Sayers: Dante: The Divine Comedy Vol.1 p.114.

Imagine, if you can, the frame of mind of the teacher of English in the secondary school. The secondary school is, it is reasonable to assume, his obvious place of refuge: despite horror stories of its difficulties the student of literature is logically equipped for work there. Literature, once his calling, is now his business and the philosophic sea-change in his life leaves him sufficiently uncertain of himself to seek instinctively safe harbour in an institution which indirectly played an important part in his life. His time at teacher training college was unproductive.

He was placed in schools, buffeted; returned to college, lectured; jettisoned into the knowing profession none the wiser and not much better informed, there to be broken in or broken altogether by Life and its purportedly rich but essentially unvaried tapestry.

Thus the teacher in the school, studies over. He no longer believes in literature, in the sense that it is an apparatus designed to force life to yield meaning and significance, but has an academic or 'disciplined' understanding of it. It hangs like an abstract painting in his mind: worth having, but ultimately unsatisfying. After his year at Teacher Training College, he looks

about himself and notes that the extravagant promises made in the name of universal education have not been kept. Bureaucratic patterns of pupil discipline, which in effect only venture to call the wrongdoer to account long after he has forgotten the offence, seem to be no more successful than older, more peremptory methods of correction. Liberal philosophies of staff management, which on point of principle baulk at directly telling anyone what to do, result in an essentially unaltered level of teacher motivation.

Not that these failures matter in themselves, for schools - like hospitals or departments of social security - define what is 'reality' from among the various circumstances that fall within their institutional purview(1). If schools insist that standards and morale are improving, then it must be true, for there is no-one else so well equipped to judge. Reality then, and this is scarcely an original observation, is malleable in the school. It is the sort of place where Anatole France's imaginary gardener Putois, the hysterical fancy of his 'neighbours' who almost achieves reality through their co-operating imaginations, could find company:

'Putois existed. I maintain it. He was. Consider, gentlemen, and you will conclude that the condition of being in no way implies matter; it signifies only the connection between attribute and

subject, it expresses merely a relation.. We [are] talking of the man whom my mother one day caused to exist, and created gardener at Saint-Omer. She gave him a name. Henceforth he acted.'(2)

Since the school needs in the end none but its administrative self to be successful, the teacher is thrown back, as a passenger upon a cruiser, onto his own devices. He reflects on his position, and it is almost possible to put into his mouth the words of Kierkegaard:

"You are going on," I said to myself, "to become an old man, without being anything, and without really undertaking to do anything.. Wherever you look about you, in literature and in life, you see the many benefactors of the age who know how to benefit mankind by making life easier and easier, some by railways.. others by telegraph, others by easily comprehended compendiums of everything worth knowing, and finally the true benefactors of the age who make spiritual existence in virtue of thought easier and easier, yet more and more significant. And what are you doing?"

.."You must do something, but inasmuch as with your limited capacities it will be impossible to make anything easier than it has become, you must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others, undertake to make something harder." This notion pleased me immensely, and at the same time it flattered me to think that I, like the rest of them, would be loved and esteemed by the whole community. For when all combine in every way to make everything easier, there remains only one possible danger, namely, that the ease becomes so great that it becomes altogether too great; then there is only one want left, though it is not yet a

felt want, when people will want difficulty.. Out of love for mankind, and out of despair at my embarrassing situation.. I conceived it as my task to create difficulties everywhere."'(3)

Kierkegaard, again in The Concluding Unscientific Postscript, provides us with an account of his protracted time as a student, a period which he describes as characterised by

'a glittering inactivity, a kind of occupation for which I still have a great partiality, and for which perhaps I have a little genius. I read much, spent the remainder of the day idling and thinking, or thinking and idling, but that was all it came to..' (4)

How far removed is the modern teacher of English from Kierkegaard's 'glittering inactivity'? He is certainly at least formally expected to add, as a teacher, to his knowledge of his discipline, but as a personality he has little part to play in the furthering of the school's purpose. He is primarily a cog in its administrative wheels. Should his classes do poorly in their examinations he will not be held to account, provided he has put the courses in question before them in a reasonably efficient fashion. If his first year pupils begin and end the year as poor readers, no criticism will be made of his performance as a teacher. Thus, the teacher is not actually expected to achieve 'positive

learning outcomes' - to teach successfully, if you like. It is a bonus if he does - and this may well assist his prospects of promotion - but it is not demanded of him. The adequate teacher is still defined in terms of the contribution he makes to the basic processes of social control undertaken by the school. This means that if his discipline is sound and his logbooks in order he need have little fear of reproach. The 'real' teacher, the communicator of ideas and sparker of enthusiasms, is perceived as a being of immense charisma, an attitude which owes a great deal to progressive and radical writings on education(5). The work of Kohl in deprived urban ghettos(6), of AS Neill in the pleasant English countryside(7), and that of many others in equally striking or romantic settings form an influential part of the education canon. Hence, the average 'uninspired' teacher is in a position that is at best akin to Kierkegaard's 'glittering activity', assuming that he takes upon himself the responsibility of furthering his knowledge of his discipline.

In this situation, Kierkegaard feels an inner prompting to productive action of some kind, in which we can read sympathetic elements of moral piety, simple vanity and even childishness - everyone is doing something and I am not. No doubt the teacher, looking around at the

achievements of others, feels rather out of things. His profession is not held in particularly high esteem. His is not the usefulness of the doctor or the architect. Pupils start and finish school and there is no saying how much or how little of their education the teacher has accounted for. Besides, everybody teaches in one way or another and everyone has been to school. The whole world is an expert on education. The teacher, in such an environment, would be thought unusual if he did not feel a need to justify himself.

But how is he to do this? It is as true for the teacher, we may suggest, as Kierkegaard felt it true for himself that

"insomuch as with your limited capacities it will be impossible to make anything easier.. You must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others, undertake to make something harder."

After all, within the institutional framework of education it is difficult to say what is achieved by the teacher, and we have argued that he is required to achieve relatively little. For the sake of his self-respect it is reasonable to suggest that he feels Kierkegaard's need 'to make something harder' - to raise difficulties hitherto unsuspected by his pupils and then

proceed to solve them, ostentatiously, in the name of humanity, saving it the agony of running out of difficulties the desire for which is, for Kierkegaard, mankind's last and most fundamental desire.

'..out of love for mankind, and out of despair at my embarrassing situation.. I conceived it as my task to create difficulties everywhere..'

But this is an absurd notion, a critic might observe. If the teacher did succumb to this irrational impulse, his attempt to realise it in action would not be tolerated by the school. He would not seriously attempt to make lessons more tedious or ideas more difficult to grasp or work more onerous to do than was necessary. If he did attempt it he would be rebuked.

But to advance this position is to have a relatively superficial understanding of the ethos of the secondary school. While the school may at present wear the bright veneer of a liberal, democratic and progressive educational philosophy, it is still understood by parent, pupil and teacher alike as a place where one's ignorance becomes apparent more readily than it is remedied. At bottom, school is still considered to be there to be endured rather than enjoyed, and without this tacit understanding it is difficult to see how schools function

as smoothly as they do. If pupils did not expect the creation of Kierkegaardian-type 'difficulties', both social and educational, their containment and compliance would be much more difficult to achieve than it is.

Hence, the school allows the teacher to 'bury' himself in participation in difficulty-creation of a Kierkegaardian order, and in doing this he is popularly considered to be making a positive contribution to the 'character-building' function of school education. This role is the one expected of him and the role that allows him to justify the actions that his 'limited capacities' compel him to undertake. Thus we have part of the reason for and part of the process whereby the teacher gives in to adopt the school-defined role of teacher.

Having sketched in outline the most obvious way in which the teacher of English is led to conform to the role expected of him by the school as institution, we must now investigate another more profound prompt to that conformity. What is his attitude of mind as he goes about his job from day to day within the school, the epitome of what every child expects of his teacher? Given that in reaching this condition the teacher has betrayed his essential conscience as regards what matters in life - the literary 'anti-courageous' Weltanschauung -

we must not make the mistake of equating his resignation to his 'fallen' condition with proof of his spiritual equanimity. Let us consider his position as delicately as we can for a moment before attempting to interpret his inner state.

We have hinted already that the teacher, when he becomes an apostate from literature and its outlook, does not become a part again of the 'courageous' world. He is led to discover, certainly, in his University education, that his 'great-souled' man is not to be understood as a stable and coherent entity, and thereby the literary claims for the moral significance of individual human experience and existence are undermined. But the apostate from literature is not suddenly transformed into the person who refuses to contemplate such issues and exists serene and confident, satisfied in the 'accumulative' justification of mundane existence. Tillich's 'courageous' man finds a precursor in Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith or Knight of the Infinite. While his mind is solemnly settled on the highly abstract question of the point of existence

'..one might suppose he was a shopkeeper taking his fling, that's just the way he disports himself, for he is not a poet, and I have sought in vain to detect in him the poetic incommensurability.. And yet and yet the whole earthly form he exhibits is a new creation by virtue of

the absurd. He constantly makes the movements of infinity, but he does them with such correctness and assurance that he constantly gets the finite out of it, and there is not a second when one has a notion of anything else.'(8)

Rather than shrug his shoulders or make a face at ultimate issues regarding the individual, as 'courageous' man and the Knight of Faith appear to do, the lapsed adherent of literature is left to agonize over the implications of his apostasy. Individual man is now questioned more and more suspiciously, in, for example, Sartre's terms:

'If man is what he is, self-deception is for ever impossible, and candour ceases to be his ideal and becomes instead his being. But is man what he is? And more generally, how can he be what he is when he exists as consciousness of being? If candour or sincerity is a universal value, it is evident that the maxim "One must be what one is" does not serve uniquely as a regulating principle for judgement and concepts by which I express what I am.

It posits not merely an ideal of knowing but an ideal of being: it proposes for us an absolute equivalence of being with itself as a prototype of being. In this sense it is necessary that we make ourselves what we are. But what are we then if we have the constant obligation to make ourselves what we are, if our mode of being is having the obligation to make ourselves what we are, if our mode of being is having the obligation to be what we are?

..Furthermore.. I am never any one of my attitudes, any one of my actions. The good speaker is the one who plays at

speaking, because he could not be speaking. The attentive pupil who wishes to be attentive.. so exhausts himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything. Perpetually absent to my body, to my acts.. I can not say either that I am here or that I am not here in the sense that we say "that box of matches is on the table", this would be to confuse my "being-in-the-world" with a "being-in-the midst of the world".'(9)

In a profound sense, the apostate of literature is given over to 'icon-breaking'; and since his icon is the integrated or 'essential' individual, considerable self-immolation cannot but be involved. In having his literary credo exploded by 'courageous' academic thought he is still unable, and probably still unwilling, to wish as George Moore did

'..not to do anything that would awake a too intense consciousness of life.. to chatter quietly every evening, over the details of existence..'(10)

- yet he finds himself in an equally intolerable position: that of Sartre's Mathieu, in The Age of Reason, divorced from existence because of his inability to come to terms with it philosophically:

'.. in a void.. adrift.. an abstraction.. a man who is not there.'(11)

Thus, the indoctrination of the University can only go so far in its rehabilitation of the acolyte of literature, breaking his old system of belief but failing to replace it with the 'courage to be'. After all, when the acolyte of literature succumbs to literature's doctrines about and demands in the name of existence, he responds with something that is already in him: he has never found 'the courage to be' adequate for facing up to life. Then - suddenly - literature is before him and the desideratum is filled. Williams' account of the relationship between the individual and the cultural ideas his world attempts to instil in him is relevant also in a spiritual context:

'Any governing body will seek to implant the "right" ideas in the minds of those whom it governs, but.. their minds are shaped by their whole experience, and the most skilful transmission of material which this experience does not confirm will fail to communicate.'(12)

Hence, the ex-disciple of literature remains alienated from the 'courageous' world, but alienated also now from the outlook which lent meaning to his life. He now believes that the 'courageous' attitude to existence is the more 'realistic' one, but he does not accept it. Intuitively he feels, as Augustine does in his Confessions, that the account of life provided by his worldly friends

'.. was a great fable, and protracted lie by whose adulterous stimulus our soul.. was being defiled.'(13)

Yet the teacher's original 'moral and immediate' account of literature has been discredited by 'courageous' academia, and he can no longer find it in him to believe in this either.

What the teacher enters into now, as he goes about his routine business in the school with suitably sober mien, is a riotous sense of irresponsibility, arising from his fundamental alienation from both of the spiritual credos we have discussed: irresponsibility not of the impetuous kind, under the influence of which one buys expensive motor cars or kisses showgirls, but of the calculated kind, through which a person handles an electric saw the way he would a butter knife, as if not fully able to appreciate the potential consequences of his actions.

He is living in the 'courageous' world yet is unable to participate in the spirit that informs it - that all existence and experience added up together in the end upon some cosmic rubric will justify itself in the production of 'higher and higher forms and values'. He is back in a familiar world, the fairy-tale simple world which accepts the absurd - a talking marionette - but not

the magical, a talking marionette who has visions of a world of meaning beyond his everyday existence and has the audacity to demand that it reveal itself. Remembering that we are attempting to experience the world of the teacher of English in the secondary school as much as explain it, let us enter into that fairy-tale simple world again with him.

The Professor And the Flea

by

Hans Christian Andersen

'There was once a balloonist - that is, a captain of a balloon, who came to a bad end: his balloon ripped and he fell straight to the ground and was smashed.. His son.. landed safe and sound, with invaluable experience in ballooning and a great desire to make use of it; but he didn't have a balloon or any money to buy one with.'(14)

The balloonist in Andersen's bitter whimsy is the Educational Idealist under whom the teacher purports to study - the rewarder of imagination and initiative, the inventive liberaliser of curricula, the generous lover of young spirits. The balloonist's son - our twice-alienated teacher - watches his mentor's endeavour collapse as his optimistic theories fail to stand the test of secondary school reality. The schools continue with the old evils of compulsion, resentment, apathy and the rest. The balloonist's son avoids his father's untimely end, involved in the action only as in a pantomime or farce. Realising, however, that he is more or less stuck with the teaching trade, he decides to design his own modest attempt at a pedagogical 'balloon'. He will plan the courses which are impractical, and state the aims and objectives which are specious and vacuous, and always be understood by his colleagues about him to

be playing the game of getting on in teaching(15), which all must play with some adroitness. A fervent preoccupation with module and policy becomes his distinguishing characteristic..

'He had to make a living, so he taught himself how to talk with his stomach; that is called being a ventriloquist. He was young and handsome, and when he had bought new clothes and grown a moustache he.. might have been mistaken for the younger son of a count. All the ladies found him handsome; and one of them so much so that she ran away from home to follow him. They travelled to distant towns and foreign lands, and there he called himself professor, no less would do.'(16)

In order to be persuasive in this cheerful role of alienated irresponsibility, the teacher-balloonist must present himself with some authority as an expert.. in pedagogy, in curriculum development, in public relations - but he must always ensure that he never speaks with a voice which is identifiably his own, for trends in education change and the teacher of today must be 'flexible' if nothing else. And so he becomes a ventriloquist of sorts, a ready mouth-piece for the convenient idea and the novel approach. He makes a great show of knowing his profession, so nothing less than the title of 'professor' will really do. This is the creature that teachers recognise and abhor and tolerate in one another. Once again, it is all part of a

difficult-to-play-well parlour game. And on the subject of associates..

'His wife helped him. She sat at the door and sold tickets, which was no fun in the winter when it was cold. She also took part in the act. She climbed into a chest and then vanished.. The chest had a double bottom; it was a matter of agility and was called an optical illusion. One evening, after the performance, when he opened the false bottom, she wasn't there. He looked everywhere but she was gone.

Too much dexterity.'(17)

It is among his colleagues that the teacher gives further colourful instances of his philosophically-engendered irresponsibility. His contempt for them, mere disillusioned apostates from literature like himself, leads to an aggravated sense of professional disloyalty. This may seem to run against the conventional wisdom which suggests that teachers, like other groups under pressure from without, stick together and present a united front. Yet a moment's reflection on the fact of teacher stress suggests that the support of colleagues is fundamentally missing: the teacher's complaint of felt isolation in the classroom agrees with this. The probationer who enters teaching, as much as the established staff member, is aware that he must sink or swim on his own, positive assistance from colleagues being singularly missing from the teacher's experience.

This is usually put down to a half understood impulse to malice or cynicism that the strictures of the job encourage, but for the teacher of English it can be explained in terms of his spiritual career. The ex-acolytes of literature and its credo are now living in the 'courageous' world, but not accepting fully its 'accumulative' articles of faith. The 'courageous' world for them is a sort of chaos, as they are themselves kinds of banished spirits in it, each a reproach to the others. Hence, the teacher will use and criticize and betray his colleagues. His fellow teacher becomes, where required, his assistant in a magic act. Not only might the professor introduce a real saw into the trick in which he cuts his lovely assistant in half, but the assistant may well - as in our story - enter the box obligingly and simply vanish. This mutual betrayal is not due to malice, or envy, or 'the way people are'. It is due to cheerful despair, and the dexterity one's limbs take on when one is no more than a puppet.

'At last the only thing he owned was a big flea. He had inherited the animal from his wife and therefore was fond of it. He trained the flea, taught it to the art of dexterity; how to present and to shoot off a cannon; the latter was very small.. The flea was proud and famous.. They had a silent agreement that they would never part; the flea would remain a bachelor and the

professor a widower, which amounts to the same thing.'(18)

Just as the story tells us, the only thing the professor owns in the end is a big flea, which he uses to earn a living. This is not the first time our teacher has stood in unlikely or uneasy relationship to an insect. For the marionette Pinocchio - the acolyte of literature in the 'courageous' world - the ghastly Talking Cricket represents the Voice of Conscience - the values of the 'courageous' world - which cannot quite be ignored. But while the Talking Cricket clings unpleasantly to the wall of Gepetto's cottage, the professor's flea becomes his showpiece, his fame and fortune. The flea also represents the values of the 'courageous' world but the professor-teacher enlists them now in his favour. The flea - the 'courageous' value system - now becomes his means of gaining authority over his charges. He sells himself irresponsibly to his pupils as the upholder of all they have been brought up to believe is good and right and proper, and they do his bidding on account of this. The flea and the professor - the outlook of the 'courageous' world and the demoralised ex-communicant of the church of literature - are partners, whereas Pinocchio and the Talking Cricket - the 'believing' acolyte of literature and that same 'courageous' outlook - could never by anything other than constitutional

enemies. Yet the partnership between the professor and the flea is founded on insincerity and irresponsibility, as we shall see when the two take their act to the 'lands of the savages', to those whom the professor-teacher has been charged to 'educate'.

'At last they had travelled in all the civilised parts of the world..

"A place where one has had a great success one should never revisit," said the professor. He knew human nature and that is not the poorest sort of knowledge.

..only the lands of the savages were left. The professor knew that there were cannibals who ate Christian human beings. But he was not a real Christian and the flea was not a human being, so he thought that there was no reason not to go there, and he expected it to be a profitable trip.

They travelled by steamer and sailing ship. The flea performed and that paid for their passage.

At last they came to the land of the savages. Here a little princess reigned. She had overthrown her own parents, for though she was only eight years old she had a will of her own and was marvellously charming and naughty.

As soon as she had seen the flea present arms and shoot off his little cannon, she fell wildly in love with him. As love can make a civilised man into a savage, imagine what it can do to one who is already a savage. She screamed, stamped her feet, and said "It is him or no one!"

"My sweet little sensible girl, we shall have to make him into a human first,"

said her father. "You leave that to me, old man," she answered.

..The professor put the flea into her little hand. "Now you're a human being," declared the princess. "You shall reign together with me, but you will have to obey or I will kill you and eat the professor." (19)

The teacher's secret irresponsibility - the result of his alienation from his 'literary' Weltanschauung and his inability to come to terms spiritually with the 'courageous' one - when taking up his sacred charge of educating the young is summed up perfectly by the way in which he and the flea overcome any qualms about their visit to the lands of the savages: he is not a Christian - or a 'courageous' philosopher - and the flea is not a human being - or a sincerely held 'courageous' credo. Arriving in the lands of the savages the professor-teacher meets the little princess, whose nature and relationship with her parents and subjects sum up the impression made upon the teacher by the modern schoolchild and the curious way in which society treats the child: 'for though she was only eight years old she had.. overthrown her parents.. and had a will of her own and was marvellously charming and naughty'. The teacher-professor sees this outlook and the child's ready acceptance of this outlook - the princess, after all, falls in love with the flea and declares it her consort -

as beneath contempt and, alienated from the 'courageous' world as much as from the literary Weltanschauung, is ideally equipped to exploit his new freedom. If absurdity is what they want he will provide it and, turning it to his own advantage, will finally aspire to the rank of 'balloonist', that of the educational expert who will inspire a new generation of dedicated teachers..

'The professor got a room for himself.. He got a hammock for a bed, and lying in that was almost like being in the balloon he still dreamed about..

..The professor was bored. He wanted to leave the land of the savages but he had to take the flea along; it was his protege and the supplier of his daily bread.

He strained his power of thought as much as he could, and then jumped out of the hammock and exclaimed, "I've got it!"

He went to the princess' father and said "Please allow me to work. I want to introduce your people to what we, in the great world, call culture."

"And what can you teach me?" asked the father of the princess.

"My greatest accomplishment," answered the professor, "is a cannon which when fired makes such a bang that the earth trembles and all the birds in the air fall down roasted and ready to eat."

"Bring on that cannon," said the king.

But the only cannon in the whole country was the little one the flea could fire, and that was much too small.

"I will make a bigger one," said the professor. "I need lots of silk material, ropes, strings, needles, and thread. Besides some oil of camphor which is good against air-sickness." All that he asked for, he got. Not until he was finished and the balloon was ready to be filled with hot air and sent up did he call the people together to see his cannon. The flea was sitting on the princess' hand, watching the balloon being blown up. And the balloon stretched itself and grew fatter and swelled. It was so wild it was difficult to hold.

"I have to take the cannon up in the air to cool it off. Alone, I cannot manage it. I have to have someone who knows something about cannons along to help me, and here only the flea will do."

"I hate giving you permission to go," said the princess as she held out the flea to the professor, who took it on his hand.

"Let go of the ropes, up goes the balloon!" he cried.

The savages thought he said "up goes the cannon," and the balloon rose up into the air above the clouds and flew away from the land of the savages.'(20)

The sense of bitter absurdity that the demoralised and twice-alienated teacher finds in the educational charade which he has no option other than to participate in finds expression in the chaotic and surreal ending to Andersen's story: people build a cannon with ropes and silk and baskets and prepare to fire it by putting people into it and watching them float off into the clouds. The teacher-professor's irresponsibility, which we have

sometimes called cheerful irresponsibility, may be better described as the desperate irresponsibility engendered by his participation in a world whose philosophy he can understand but not fully accept, at the same time authoritatively cut off from a view of life which once lent meaning to his existence. The teacher of English, however, is still trusted by those he serves, who believe that he belongs to the 'courageous' world which, through the University, has educated him out of his doctrinal error. The teacher has, however, in his own being fled their influence and is unlikely to return, other than in the guise of professional charlatan.

'The little princess, her father and her mother, and all their people stood and waited. They are waiting still and if you don't believe me you can travel to the land of the savages. Every child there will tell you the story of the flea and the professor. They are expecting him back as soon as the cannon has cooled off.'(21)

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND HIS PUPILS

'..the intensity of suggestion that may
reside in the stray figure, the
unattached character, the image en
disponibilite.'

Henry James: The Portrait of a Lady
Preface

Having digested our spiritual account of the teacher of English thus far, the critic unimpressed by our approach and sceptical of what it may contribute towards an understanding of what happens in the schools may raise the following point of criticism.

So far, our critic observes, we have attempted to establish 'fringe of consciousness' accounts of the teacher: intuitively arrived at images of him, explicated through analogy. Out of these accounts we identified one in particular, which we called the teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness', who was a kind of out-of-place individual, obscurely different from those around him, and fundamentally hostile to the outlook and philosophy of the institution that he served. He is a symbol of school authority but secretly in profound rebellion against it. In the course of our subsequent investigation of the spiritual experience of the teacher of English, we offered a rationale the existence of such a teacher.

Now, says our critic, this spiritual account of the teacher of English and his extreme alienation clashes with an obvious fact about the teacher that renders absurd an account of him as a profoundly alienated

creature, antipathetic to the 'courageous' outlook of the school and the world it serves. Consider the secondary school as an organisation. Teachers and pupils fulfil the roles expected of them and work together in an atmosphere that is usually co-operative and trouble-free. Pupils accept their teachers and respond to the demands their teachers make of them. Although the teacher possesses the formal authority to make his pupils do as he asks, his ability to secure their co-operation broadly depends on his personal relationship with them. Schools could not function without this common understanding(1). In view of this generally accepted fact, how is it possible for the teacher of English, if he is as profoundly alienated from his educative role as the spiritual account provided here suggests, to function at all in the classroom? Yet it is a plain fact that he does function, whatever the quality of his outcomes, despite the fact that the spiritual account given of him makes the possibility of vital personal relationships between teacher and pupils very remote. To illustrate the gulf that your spiritual account of the teacher of English puts between teacher and pupil serves to highlight the importance of the above criticism.

First of all, the University, representing the 'courageous' world, throws the 'believing' acolyte of literature into a spiritual abyss, in which he is forced to contemplate two horrible 'realities', the antithesis of his literary credo. The first of these is the 'fact' that man, immensely complex, has no essential nature: this makes pointless demands for a meaningful account of life in terms of the individual's experience. Second is the 'fact' that no metaphysical account of life beyond a belief in an unexamined 'universal.. law of progressive evolution in which accumulation produces higher and higher forms and values' is worth consideration. This strikes the defeated acolyte of literature, who cannot accept the philosophy of 'the courage to be', as an impossibly nebulous outlook on life. The student's inability to accept the 'courageous' outlook, coupled with his broken faith in the militant, radically-doubting outlook sparked by his original experience of literature, means that he is trapped in a kind of philosophic limbo. Unlike Pinocchio, who becomes a Real Boy just as the painted comforts of Gepetto's room become real when Pinocchio accepts the values of the adult world, the acolyte of and new apostate from literature can be identified as the lifeless marionette left lying beside a chair in the cottage, no longer possessed of the motivation to challenge the 'courageous' world by

proclaiming and advertising his own 'woodenness' as a member of that fairy-tale simple world:

'Then the dream ended, and Pinocchio awoke, full of wonder. You can easily imagine how astonished he was when he saw that he was no longer a marionette, but a real boy like other boys. He looked around, but instead of the straw walls of the cottage, he saw a pretty little room simply but beautifully furnished.. then he went to look in the mirror but he did not recognise himself. He no longer saw the usual image of a wooden marionette, but the expressive, intelligent features of a fine boy, with brown hair and blue eyes, who looked as happy and joyful as an Easter Sunday.

In the midst of all these wonders coming one after the other, Pinocchio no longer knew whether he was really awake or asleep with his eyes open. "And my father, where is he?" he cried suddenly. He went into the next room where he saw old Gepetto, well, and lively, and good-natured, just as he was before.

"Daddy, explain this to me; what is the meaning of this sudden change?" asked Pinocchio, throwing his arms around his neck and kissing him.

"This sudden change in our circumstances is all owing to you," replied Gepetto.. "Because when children who were naughty become good, it gives a new and smiling appearance to the whole family."

"And the old wooden Pinocchio, where is he?"

"There he is," replied Gepetto, pointing to a large marionette that was leaning against a chair with his head on one side, his arms dangling, and his legs doubled up and crossed, so that it was a miracle that he stood there at all.'(2)

The finality of his defeat by a prosaic world that once appeared as a treasury of untapped meaning cannot be overstated. Just as Gerda, in her quest for Kai, finds herself in a beautiful garden whose flowers insist on telling tales that stress not their individual and ideal natures but merely their relationship with things and events in the wider world, as if all part of an 'accumulative' final meaning, so the disillusioned acolyte of literature exists in a world which stresses only its temporality and essential relationship with the 'accumulative' body of experience and existence recognised by the 'courageous' world:

'Every flower stood in the warm sunshine and dreamed its own fairy tale; and that it was willing to tell, but none of them knew anything about Kai..

..Gerda asked the honey-suckle; and this is what it said: "High up above the narrow mountain road the old castle clings to the steep mountainside. Its ancient walls are covered by green ivy; the vines spread over the balcony where a beautiful young girl stands. No unplucked rose is fresher than she, no apple blossom, plucked and carried by the spring wind, is lighter or dances more daintily than she. Hear how her silk dress rustles. Will he not come soon?"

"Is that Kai you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I tell only my own story, my own dream," answered the honeysuckle.

"I don't care either to see you or to hear about you," said Gerda, angrily. "Your story is a silly story," and with those words she ran to the other end of the garden. The door in the wall was closed; she turned the old rusty handle and it sprang open. Out went little Gerda, in her bare feet, out into the wide world.. looking at the landscape; summer was long since over, it was late fall. Back in the old lady's garden, you could not notice the change in seasons, for it was always summer and the flowers of every season were in bloom.'(3)

Once confirmed as a teacher by the 'courageous' world, the student-apostate takes on the role of official representative of the 'courageous' outlook he despises, while accepting what he has been led to believe is its probable truth. Through a desperate irresponsibility, generated by his extreme alienation, which allows him to fundamentally detach himself from the interests of his pupils and pursue for his own ends school-approved educational goals (continually changing), the teacher cynically manipulates the world of the classroom.

How could such a teacher, our critic asks confidently, adequately function in the secondary school as it is presently organised, its cohesion only credibly explained by the possibility of personal relationships between teachers and pupils?

We reject this criticism, however, by maintaining that an alternative account of the relationship between teacher and pupil exists, and that this account is consistent with the fringe of consciousness account of the teacher of English as 'alienated personality' or 'hostile consciousness'. In order to appreciate this account, it is necessary to put behind us the liberal and sentimental assumptions that attend the account of the teacher-pupil relationship based on sympathy and common understanding. For illumination, we turn a final time to the world of the sailing ship, 'in the time before steamships', to render this account of teacher-pupil relations intelligible. Our setting this time is the deck of the *Narcissus*, the scene for Joseph Conrad's exploration of the religious impulse in irreligious men The Nigger of the Narcissus, the tale of dying negro sailor James Wait's last months of shipboard life in the company of his fellows. We find ourselves now not in the eighteenth century of the *Indomitable* but the late nineteenth century world of the merchant ship, whose crew, existing apart from the cold sprawl of the industrial land-world much as the pupils of the secondary school exist apart from the ordinary social world, is suddenly surprised by the arrival of a strange figure, soon to be recognised as the teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness'. The curtain rises..

'The last man had gone over, and there was a moment of silence while the mate peered at his list- "Sixteen, seventeen," he muttered. "I am one hand short bo'son," he said aloud.. "Can't make out that last name. It's all a smudge.. That will do, men. Go below."

The indistinct and motionless group stirred, broke up, began to move forward.

"Wait!" cried a deep ringing voice.. A tall figure.. came down and pushed through the crowd, marching with a heavy tread towards the light on the quarter-deck.. The nigger was calm, cool, towering, superb. The men had approached him and stood behind him in a body. He overtopped the tallest by half a head. He said: "I belong to the ship."'(4)

When the teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness' appears before his pupils, the circumstances he appears in and the impression he creates are similar in temper to those attending James Wait's - the Nigger of the Narcissus - arrival on board the trading ship. The sailor's experience of being part of the running of the ship is similar to the pupil's consciousness of being part of the administration of the school: he is a number, a cipher, a unit, essentially anonymous. This in itself is not an uncomfortable condition. It is secure and regulated, and produces the feeling of warmth that one experiences upon being roused from the half-consciousness of mechanical participation

in any pursuit. The pupils, like the sailors in Conrad's tale, are 'indistinct and motionless'; they 'stir' rather than respond to commands and instruction. It is into this pleasant torpor that the presence of the teacher intrudes, but in so strange a fashion that the pupil feels as if his present dream of school is gently interrupted and melded with another.

From the first, the teacher's identity is uncertain - his name is a smudge on the log book of the ship - but it is certainly the case that someone figuring as teacher in the school experience should be present and so he is accepted by his pupils without demur. When they concentrate upon him long enough to appreciate his alien nature, their response is half-instinctive. They are struck immediately by the fact that he is strangely different from themselves, yet they do not know whether to applaud or execrate him, just as Wait as the Nigger is undeniably real and impressive, yet alien in his appearance. Their reaction, like the sailors', is to stand behind him and wait for command. He is real and important, for the jarring elements that make him up (however subtly or crudely understood) arouse his charges from institutional somnolence, and give shape and form to their amorphous sense of school. When he speaks, his voice is firm, authoritative. He states; and this is

very different from the muddle of fragmented conversations that otherwise make up the school day. His effect upon his pupils has been, in the clinical sense of the term, to fascinate them. Having disrupted their dream of school he is expected, indeed required, to replace it.

Despite the intense concentration his pupils exert almost involuntarily upon him when he makes his entrance, they are quite unprepared to experience him directly, for they do not experience school directly, but rather as a series of memos and announcements made over their heads in halls and on printed letters, delivered from dizzy heights. They recoil in surprise and shock, like ordinary seaman Dunkin taken unawares:

'Dunkin, bent over the cask, drank out of the tin, splashing the water, turned round and noticed the nigger looking at him over the shoulder with calm loftiness. He moved up sideways..

"Giv' us a big of 'baccy, mate," he breathed out confidentially, "I 'aven't 'ad smoke or chew for the last month. I am rampin' mad for it. Come on, old man!"

"Don't be familiar," said the nigger. Dunkin started and sat down on a chest nearby, out of sheer surprise. "We haven't kept pigs together," continued James Wait in a deep undertone. "Here's your tobacco."(5)

Dunkin's confusion at the confident, disparaging words of the nigger and the latter's marvellous high-handedness resembles that of the pupil confronted by the teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness'.

Our apostate has taken absolutely to the role of Teacher, and as such lacks any hint of hesitation in his classroom demeanour. This overwhelming sense of 'teacher-personality' is enough to render the pupil amenable to ordinary suggestion. The institutional torpor in which the child exists throws up the associated dream-of-Teacher, who if he is nothing but the Teacher assumes control. Thus the teacher-pupil relationship is established: the teacher is not formally understood and obeyed by the child at all. He is understood and obeyed as we might understand and obey someone rousing us vigorously from a dream-filled sleep: confusedly, but with a sense of urgency prompted by the notion that reality has taken us unawares. And just as, waking from a dream, we are anxious to come to terms with the 'real' situation before us as quickly as possible, so the teacher is obeyed and the pupil influenced and directed.

The teacher as 'alien personality' or 'hostile consciousness', however, succeeds in much more than simply controlling his charges. It is part of his - quite conscious - function to bind them together in a loyalty towards him that has nothing of personal liking or sentiment in it. This second fascination is an intuitive or religious sense on the part of his pupils that There Is Something Wrong With The Teacher - something that makes it morally incumbent upon them to bear with him in his demands of them and have respect in the face of a dreadful process of spiritual disintegration that might culminate at any moment, just as 'stalking death' may at any time claim the 'obnoxious nigger' in the sailors' midst. It is not liking for Wait as a person that prompts the deckhands to wait upon his needs and whims, but respect for what they know despite appearances - for Wait is 'overbearing' and 'cutting' and 'unconciliating' towards his servants - is Fate about to overtake a fellow creature.

'It was just what they had expected, and hated to hear, that idea of a stalking death, thrust at them many times a day like a boast and like a menace by this obnoxious nigger. He seemed to take a pride in that death which, so far, had attended only upon the ease of his life; he was overbearing about it, as if no-one else in the world had ever been intimate with such a companion; he paraded it unceasingly before us with an affectionate persistence that made its presence indubitable, and at the same

time incredible.. True, he was always awake, and managed, as we sneaked out on deck, to plant in our backs some cutting remark that, for the moment, made us feel as if we had been brutes, and afterwards made us suspect ourselves of being fools. We spoke in low tones within that fo'c'sle as though it had been a church. He served him in bed with rage and humility.. and he rewarded us by his unconciliating criticism. He had found the secret of keeping for ever on the run the fundamental imbecility of mankind; he had the secret of life, that confounded dying man, and he made himself master of every moment of our existence. We grew desperate and remained submissive.. we were trying to be decent chaps and found it.. difficult; we oscillated between the desire of virtue and the fear of ridicule; we wished to save ourselves from the pain of remorse, but did not want to be made the contemptible dupes of sentiment.. He fascinated us.. He overshadowed the ship. Invulnerable in his promise of speedy corruption he trampled on our self-respect, he demonstrated to us daily our want of moral courage.'(6)

This is the teacher's most profound hold over his pupils, and explains the control of more teachers over their classes than does the sentimental theory discussed above, for there are many classes who obey without demur teachers who are not particularly formidable and whom they do not profess to 'like' or feel in sympathy with. The religious intuition, then, of the teacher's pupils concerning the fact that there is something obscurely wrong with him - 'something defective or abnormal in the constitution and the blood' - gives the teacher as 'alien

personality'

'the secret of life, that confounded dying man.. he made himself master of every moment of our existence. We grew desperate, and remained submissive..'

This is not to say that the loyalty and co-operation pupils extend towards their teacher is unmixel with bitterness and resentment. Their loyalty is 'Wait's shipmates' loyalty:

'Invulnerable in his promise of speedy corruption he trampled on our self-respect.. we were trying to be decent chaps and found it difficult.. we wished to save ourselves from the pain of remorse but.. not.. be made the contemptible dupes of sentiment.'

Overall, then, our revised picture of the teacher-pupil relationship looks more realistic than the liberal and sentimental version described above, in that it allows an ambivalent reaction to the teacher on the part of pupils without undermining his control. It provides a more plausible account of the way in which the majority of teachers, not particularly 'charismatic', stay in charge of their classroom situation despite the fact that changes in the administration of the school - such as the introduction of the bureaucratic model of pupil-discipline - inhibit the teacher's use of the formal

authority accorded him(7).

If this account of the pupil's experience of the teacher is correct, then the teacher, however alienated, is nevertheless an influence on those he 'teaches'. What is the nature of this influence? Reflection on this question leads us to the recognition of a curious irony.

Consider: the striking individual composed of jarring elements who 'startles' the individual pupil out of his state of institutional semi-consciousness, and the obscurely suffering creature with 'something defective in the constitution and the blood' who calls forth the grudging loyalty of pupils, both encourage a perspective on the human individual markedly at odds with the philosophy of the 'courageous' world. In a sense, the chords that the teacher strikes in his pupils are in keeping with the philosophy of their first experience of humane literature, that meaning-demanding, individual-centred antithesis of the 'courageous' outlook. The apathy characteristic of so many in the secondary school might well owe something to the teacher's influence; the sparking of an 'anti-courageous' impulse in the pupil by one who is, ironically, an apostate from that same 'anti-courageous' philosophy. Does the teacher prompt the

pupil to consider things his world thinks it unwise for him to consider, slowing ordinary life down for his pupil's examination in much the same way that lying sailor James Wait is rumoured to be causing the Narcissus to stall in mid-ocean, for fear of reaching land?

'We all knew the old man's ideas about Jimmy, and nobody dared to combat them. They were unsettling, they caused pain; and what was worse, they might have been true for all we knew. Only once did he condescend to explain them fully, but the impression was lasting. He said that Jimmy was the cause of head winds. Mortally sick men - he maintained - linger till the first sight of land, and then die; and Jimmy knew that the land would draw the life from him. It is so in every ship. Didn't we know it? Only lubberly fools couldn't see it. Whoever heard of such a run of calms and head winds? It wasn't natural..'(8)

And if he does prompt such a consideration in his pupils, is this in itself a bad thing?

'[Wait] was demoralising. Through him we were becoming highly humanised, tender, complex, excessively decadent; we understood the subtlety of his fear, sympathized with all his revulsions, shrinkings, evasions, delusions - as though we had been over-civilised and rotten, and without any knowledge of the meaning of life: we had the air of being initiated in some infamous mysteries; we had the profound grimaces of conspirators, exchanged meaning glances, significant short words. We were inexpressibly vile and very much pleased with ourselves.'(9)

CHAPTER SIX:
A CRITICISM OF THE 'ANTI-COURAGEOUS'
LITERARY OUTLOOK

'Let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself "is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good or evil?" I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance.'

Joseph Butler, quite without irony, in Fifteen Sermons 3.4 quoted in Duncan-Jones A: Butler's Moral Philosophy p.116

The point and purpose of this penultimate chapter of our investigation into the spiritual condition of the teacher of English in the secondary school is summed up in RD Laing's barb and reminder in the introduction to his The Politics of Experience:

'..Humanity is estranged from its authentic possibilities. This basic vision prevents us from taking any equivocal view of the sanity of commonsense, or of the madness of the so-called madman. However, what is required is more than a passionate outcry of outraged humanity.'(1)

If our account of the literary philosophy of 'anti-courage' has succeeded in unveiling a hitherto obscure outlook on life, then it is clear that some evaluation of this outlook is required.

It strikes me that there are two main positions that might be taken on the question of the value of the 'anti-courageous' outlook, and it is my aim in this chapter to render both positions as clearly as possible in the hope of arriving at a balanced appraisal of that literary Weltanschauung.

The Case For 'Anti-Courage'

If, as Oscar Wilde observes in De Profundis, 'everything to be true must become a religion'(2), then the

'courageous' and 'anti-courageous' outlooks clash on the most profound of levels. The prejudice of the 'courageous' world against 'anti-courageous' philosophy and its peculiar mysticism might be said to find its origins in the Enlightenment. Discussing forms of government, Paine observes that

'the first was a government of priestcraft, the second of conquerors, and the third of reason.'(3)

Seen from this 'progressive' view-point, the 'anti-courageous' outlook seems to smack of 'priestcraft', rather than the 'reason' that is held to inform 'courageous' philosophy, albeit a reason predicated on a nebulous metaphysical assumption. Because of this, the 'anti-courageous' already face an uphill struggle, regardless of any merit this approach to life and experience may have. The outlook is considered, perhaps, superstitious and even elitist: it preoccupies itself with metaphysics rather than disposing of them neatly, if mysteriously, as is the case with the 'courageous' outlook. If we lend credence to Eliot, writing in The Idea of A Christian Society, we will consider as plausible the idea that the 'courageous' point of view of 'minimum metaphysics' has finally conquered all opposition:

'It may be that the conditions unfavourable to the arts today lie too deep and are too extensive to depend upon the differences between one form of government and another, so that the prospect before us is either of slow decay or sudden extinction..' (4)

More optimistically, though still acknowledging a social context similar to that described by Eliot, Jung notes that Western man has not entirely abandoned the investigation of the self:

'To me, the crux of the spiritual problem of today is to be found in the fascination which psychic life exerts upon modern man. If we are pessimists we shall call it a sign of decadence; if we are optimistically inclined, we shall see in it the promise of a far-reaching spiritual change in the western world..' (5)

But contemporary man is by no means peculiarly receptive to ideas beyond the prosaic. For the anthropologist, man's every artistic response to living is fraught with the search for moral meaning. Vide Joseph Campbell in The Hero With A Thousand Faces, an account of myth and its significance:

'The mythological hero, setting forth from his commandy hut or castle is lured, carried away or else voluntarily proceeds to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadowy presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark.. or be slain by the opponent and descend into death. Beyond the threshold, then,

the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward - sacred marriage, father atonement, apotheosis.. intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being. The final work is that of the return. At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of the dead.. The boon that he brings restores the world.'(6)

Thus, man is, and always has been, susceptible to an 'anti-courageous' philosophy of life. If we consider that established - while not denying his susceptibility to 'courageous' thought and philosophy, a susceptibility amply illustrated by reference to the prosaic fate of Ulysses(7) - we must put the following question to ourselves. If man is positively disposed towards 'anti-courageous', 'meaning-hungry' philosophy, what has he to gain by turning to it?

First of all we may refer to Thoreau, and his opinion of the 'non-transcendentally' minded. It is succinct and to the point:

'We are a race of tit-men and soar little higher in our intellectual flights than the columns of the daily paper..' (8)

The sort of intellectual and spiritual half-life suggested by Thoreau is reflected rather more luridly by Victor Hugo, who sees those in such a state as 'like the dead, vanishing on condition of being reborn next day'(9). In terms of its moral consequences on the living of ordinary life, the 'courageous' outlook might be seen as encouraging the sort of world described by James Baldwin in his description of contemporary America and its cinematic art, The Devil Finds Work:

'The mindless and hysterical banality of the evil presented in The Exorcist is the most terrifying thing about the film. The Americans should certainly know more about evil than that; if they pretend otherwise they are lying.. At the end of The Exorcist the demon-racked little girl murderess kisses the Holy Father and she remembers nothing: she is departing with her mother who will, presumably, soon make another film.'(10)

The moral consequences of a total commitment to a philosophy of minimal metaphysics are also evident in Bertrand Russell's speculation of the future of mankind in a 'courageous' world:

'Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way..' (11)

The ultimate dark and amoral product of the 'courageous' world is surely Burgess' Alex, 'the Clockwork Orange':

'And now I feel this bolshy big hollow inside my plott, feeling very surprised at myself. I knew what was happening, O my brothers. I was like growing up. Yes, yes, yes, there it was. Youth must go, ah yes. But youth is only being in a way like.. an animal. No, it is not like being an animal so much as being like one of those malenky toys you viddy being sold on the streets, like little chellovecks made out of tin and with a spring inside and then a winding handle on the outside and you wind it up grrr grrr grrr and off it itties, like walking, o my brothers. But it itties in a straight line and bangs straight into things bang bang and it cannot help what it is doing. Being young is like being one of those malenky machines..' (12)

In his Ulysses, Joyce sums up the case against the 'courageous' 'barbarian':

'Why did he desist from speculation? Because it was a task for a superior intelligence to substitute other, more acceptable phenomena in place of the less acceptable phenomena to be removed.' (13)

If such are the putative debilitating effects of the 'courageous' outlook, then what conclusion can we arrive at with regard to the literary-religious philosophy of 'anti-courage' other than to consider it a positive good? An endorsement of the 'anti-courageous' outlook might save the 'courageous' adult from the sort of banal

horrors faced by Dreiser's Clyde in An American Tragedy:

'In addition, he kept telling himself that now, having as much money as he was making, he could go about and do as he pleased.. He could go to other places that might not be as low, maybe more refined. He wouldn't want to go with a crowd like that again. He would rather have just one girl somewhere if he could find her.. He must find a free pagan girl of his own.. and spend his money on her..' (14)

Again, contact with the 'courageous' might help save the 'anti-courageous' from becoming, in his turn, dehumanised by his metaphysical quest for point and meaning. As Nietzsche observed, when you look into the abyss, the abyss looks also into you, and Pavese sums up the dangers to the person who dares to elevate himself in such a fashion:

'The man who cannot live with charity, sharing other men's pain, is punished by feeling his own with intolerable anguish. Pain is rendered acceptable only by raising it to the level of our common destiny and sympathising with other sufferers. The penalty of the egoist is that he realises this only when he himself is under the lash; then he vainly strives to learn charity, out of self interest.' (15)

Again, the recognition of the spiritual dimension attendant on any attempt to come to terms with the philosophy of 'anti-courage' might itself aid the clinical understanding of our own inner workings, since

at present the existence of man's spiritual aspect is rarely intimated, a truth exemplified by Walker's comment upon Freud's attitude to consciousness:

'Having drawn attention to variations in consciousness, and to the three levels of the 'subconscious', the 'preconscious' and the 'conscious', Freud stopped here and ignored the possibility that there might exist a higher level.. the state of illumination of the seer..'(16)

All of the above may well incline us to a favourable opinion of the 'anti-courageous' philosophy, seeing it as a path to the enrichment of life by allotting attention to much, hitherto ignored, that has purchase on man's consciousness. However, there is another side to the argument, according to which the philosophy of 'anti-courage' might be viewed as an unalloyed evil. It is this argument to which, with some trepidation on my own part, we now turn.

The Case Against 'Anti-Courage'

Whatever the frailties of 'courageous' thinking, 'anti-courageous' thought may be viewed as considerably more destructive and pernicious to the individual in his attempt to live successfully. Firstly, it might be said of an initial attraction to 'anti-courageous' thought that

'..one can hardly help being primitively attracted to the romantic belief that potentiality is always better than actuality, that Nothing is always better than Anything, yet.. one could not help doubting it, just as we cannot help doubting the war monument-orators who tell us how lucky the dead soldiers are not to be growing old and fat and dull like us..' (17)

In fact, the whole idea that man's thinking is at bottom litigiously mystical and 'anti-courageous' is not one that passes unchallenged. Vide Gibbon, in ironic mood:

'the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is omitted in the law of Moses; it is darkly insinuated by the prophets; and during the long period.. between.. servitudes the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compass of the present life.' (18)

The 'anti-courageous' position can even be shown by the accounts of its most distinguished adherents to be a painful one. This from Mann's Tonio Kroger:

'Literature is not a calling, it is a curse, believe me! When does one begin to feel the curse? Early, horribly early.. it begins by your feeling yourself set apart, in a curious opposition to the nice, regular people; there is a gulf of ironic sensibility, of knowledge, scepticism, disagreement between you and others.. You realise that you are alone and from then on rapprochement is simply hopeless!'(19)

And this:

'[Tonio Kroger] was exhausted with jealousy, worn out with the gaiety in which he had no part. Always with burning cheeks he had stood in his dark corner and suffered for you, you blind, you living, you happy ones.'(20)

The 'anti-courageous' literary-religious mentality can be seen as narcissistic, self-centred and morbid. This from Herlihy's The Sleep of Baby Filbertson, the tale of an adult and obese child who refuses to face the ordinary pains of living:

'Rudy believed he could feel the capsule exploding inside of him, soothing him with its thousands of warm hands that massaged gently every vessel of his blood stream.. Ninety years from now, he began, I'll be a hundred and nine. Five years ago I was fourteen and weighed two hundred and eleven pounds.. Fifteen years ago I don't know what I weighed but I was four, and five years before that I wasn't thought of yet and didn't weigh an ounce. Imagining himself weightless, even unborn, he was soon fast asleep, wrapped into himself, knees and elbows and head grouped together. A sheet covered him entirely so that the bed was like a slab on which lay the corpse of some giant foetus..'(21)

For many, it is the lack of proportion in 'anti-courageous' philosophy which is dangerous, and is to be feared as much as Hogg's pious murderer in The Private Memoirs And Confessions of A Justified Sinner:

"It is for his great mental faculties that I dread him," said he. "It is incalculable what evil such a person as he may do, if so disposed. There is a sublimity in his ideas, with which there is to me a mixture of terror; and when he talks of religion, he does it as one that rather dreads its truths than reverences them.. Religion is a sublime and glorious thing.. but there is nothing so dangerous to man as the wresting of any of its principles, or forcing them beyond their due bounds - this is of all others the readiest way to destruction.'(22)

Further, the instability of those inclined to 'anti-courageous' thought is trenchantly underlined in the professorial reproof delivered to the dissolute yet nervous student Gourlay in Douglas Brown's The House with the Green Shutters:

"It's a curious sketch," said the professor. "It contains a serious blunder in grammar, and several mistakes in spelling, but it shows, in some ways, a wonderful imagination." .. "Of course there are various kinds of imagination," said Tam. "In its lowest form it merely recalls something which the eyes have already seen, and brings it vividly before the mind. A higher form pictures something which you never saw but only conceived as a possible existence. Then there's the imagination which not only sees but hears - actually hears what a

man would say on a given occasion, and entering the blood, tells you exactly why he does it. The highest form is both creative and conservative.. merging in diviner thought. It irradiates the world. Of that high power there is no evidence in the essay before me.. Indeed, there's a curious want of bigness in the sketch - no large nobility of phrase.. It's as if a number of impressions had seized the writer's mind, which he jotted down hurriedly, lest they should escape him.. in this sketch there's a perception at the back of every sentence. It displays indeed too nervous a sense of the external world.. I would strongly impress upon the writer.. to set himself down for a spell of real, hard, solid, and deliberate thought. That almost morbid perception, with philosophy to back it, might create an opulent and vivid mind. Without philosophy it would simply be a curse.'(23)

And, certainly, a notable feature of 'anti-courageous' philosophy is its lack of any 'real, hard, solid' content. It is, as we noted earlier, concerned typically with doubt and searching and the pursuit of an unrealisable and untouchable absolute. Given all this, one might call the 'anti-courageous' literary-religious acolyte what Twain, in his A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, called the sage Merlin:

'..an old numskull, a magician who believed in his own magic; and no magician can thrive who is handicapped with a superstition like that..'(24)

The negative outcomes of 'anti-courageous' philosophy lead us to pose the question Callicles puts to Socrates, in the Gorgias, on the same issue (though under another name):

'But what kind of wisdom can we call it, Socrates, that takes a man of parts and spoils his gifts, so that he cannot defend himself or another from mortal danger.. A man like that, if you will pardon a rather blunt expression, can be slapped on the face with complete impunity.'(25)

The outcome of 'anti-courageous' thought, then, is the fate of the astronomer in Johnson's Rasselas, bewailing to the inquiring prince and his friends:

'I have lost that which can never be restored, I have seen the sun rise and set.. an idle gazer on the light of heaven.. I only have made no advances but am still helpless and ignorant.. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth and the instruction of the planets. Twenty months are passed; who shall restore them?'(26)

This might point us towards the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, to what might have been that philosopher's refutation of the usefulness of 'anti-courageous' thought:

'Dost thou wish to be praised by a man who curses himself thrice every hour?'(27)

The gulf between 'anti-courageous' thought and 'real' life is one that even adherents of the philosophy of literary-religious 'anti-courage' allow. Thornton Wilder, in The Woman of Andros, has his idealistic heroine, who rejects, for the sake of higher things, the social world to which she has been born, warned as follows:

"Well, you know Chrysis.. You know, life in a family is not in the same world as life in Euripides.."(28)

This gulf is accentuated by the unfamiliar literary-religious morality of pieces such as Swinburne's A Ballad of Francois Villon, wherein right seems wrong and degradation glory:

'Prince of sweet songs made out of tears
and fire,
A harlot was thy nurse, a God thy sire;
Shame soiled thy song, and song assoiled
thy shame
But from thy feet now death has washed
the mire
Love reads out first at head of all our
quire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's
name.'(29)

If the pseudo-world of the 'anti-courageous' is to gain in legitimised significance over the 'real' world, then this would be tantamount to Frankenstein's submission to the will of the monster he himself gave life to. Quoth

the monster: 'You are my creator, but I am your master. Obey!'(30) Ultimately, the failure of the 'anti-courageous' viewpoint lies in what Joyce described as the

'ineluctable modality of the visible.. signatures of all things I am here to read.. If you can put your five fingers through it, it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see.'(31)

In poetic fashion, Joyce agrees with Lewis, who writes in A Grief Observed:

'All reality is iconoclastic. The earthly beloved.. incessantly triumphs over your mere idea of her. And you want her to; you want her with all her faults, all her unexpectedness. That is, in her foursquare and independent reality. And this, not any image or memory, is what we are to love still, after she is dead..'(32)

'Anti-courageous' philosophy is put in its proper perspective, perhaps, by Thoreau's rule-of-thumb for sane living:

'We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests; as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours. If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes.'(33)

All of which is not to say that there can be none who might benefit from inveterate adherence to 'anti-courageous' principles of living. But such thinkers

would be well advised to bear in mind Sir Thomas More's description of the defences of his Utopia:

'..Upon the top of this rock is a faire and a stronge towre builded, which thei holde with a garison of men. Other rockes ther be, that lye hidde under the water, and therefore be daungerous. The channelles be knowne onely to themselves. And therefore it seldome chaunceth that any stranger, oncles he be guided by a utopian, can come in to this haven..' (34)

Thus the arguments for and against the literary Weltanschauung. Which shall we endorse? We are obliged, as philosophers, to accommodate both. Every philosophy, implicit or explicit, has the potential to debilitate as well as illuminate: we are wise if we acknowledge that fact. The ultimate outcome of any philosophy depends upon ourselves, and whether we employ it creatively in our lives or abandon ourselves, fatalistically, to its inevitable disproportions. Thus, it must be our concern to attempt a positive response to the 'anti-courageous' philosophy. What do we deny in the teacher by failing to harness it? What do we deny thereby in ourselves? It is questions such as these that our final chapter attempts to go some way to answering.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING DISCUSSION**

Introduction

This final chapter is intended to serve several purposes. In it I will first restate the argument contained in this dissertation concerning the spiritual condition of the secondary teacher of English. Secondly, I will discuss in outline the implications of the argument for the teacher of English, his pupils and his world. Thirdly, I will provide tentative suggestions towards a remedy for the teacher's plaint, before concluding with an indication of issues, arising from this dissertation, which deserve further examination.

SUMMARY

1 The way we see the world?

According to Paul Tillich, in The Courage to Be, man in the West today has one besetting spiritual problem, which appears to admit of no solution. In a world without 'God' (or the idea of any higher power) guiding his steps and providing a theory about the significance of his life on earth, man falls prey to 'anxiety' about living. He is unsettled by his own 'contingency'; the fact that he appears to be an 'accidental' product of randomly occurring circumstances, rather than God's creation, with a destiny sure and certain. He can discern no point or purpose to his existence - he is not here 'for' anything, nor is he part of any Great Plan. He is responsible, ultimately, only to himself, there being no Day of Judgement, and nothing written down in the Book of Life.

For Tillich, man in the West today overcomes these multiple 'anxieties' by 'self-affirmation': by having the courage to exist, to live, to be without reference to any principle beyond himself. For him, the vicissitudes of living are not meaningful in themselves. They are significant only as a part of 'human striving' taken as a whole. The individual,

once God's sacred vessel, must now be content to be a part of the great and celebratory release of human energy we know as living: existence, on a grand scale, is its own justification. Again, being the supremely 'contingent' creatures that we are, self-examination is no longer required. We are creatures of no fixed essence, changing others and being changed by them, lacking any fixed or ineluctable identity.

The credo, then, of modern man in the West is as follows. Life, from the standpoint of the individual, is meaningless: trouble yourself no further and simply live. The inner life of man is a bagatelle, protean, contingent: there need be no inquiry.

2 The 'properties' of literature

We have said already that Tillich's man - 'courageous' man - has two maxims for a happy life. First of all, we should not concern ourselves with the 'meaning' of our lives, for there is no meaning as such. Life is to be celebrated rather than examined. Even losses, failures, catastrophes have a part to play in the 'dynamism' of life. Secondly,

we should cease to be so relentlessly self-regarding (in the philosophic sense). We are not beings of any 'fixed reality': we are changed continually by the simple act of living. What we are, we are made - and what we are made is easily altered.

What we call 'literature', however, has a different credo. It inspires us to think about the meaning, the point, the purpose of living. It counsels us to conscientious examination of the world we live in: to appraise, question, judge - to search for truth. It turns us also upon ourselves, encouraging the exploration of the inner life, the 'spirit'. It insists that we are not so malleable after all. In the midst of life we possess a fixed reality, a 'character'. We cannot escape it, nor become someone else by new experience, new stimuli. We can have no refuge from ourselves. There can be no triumphant shedding of our skins.

We called this outlook on living the philosophy of 'anti-courage', opposed as it is to the outlook of the world Tillich calls 'courageous'. The philosophy of 'anti-courage' has an important part to play in determining the spiritual condition of

the teacher of English, as we discover in what follows.

3 The impact of literature on the schoolchild

Schoolchildren enjoy their first vital encounter with literature in the latter stages of the secondary school. Prior to this, they experience literature as a stimulus: it is employed as a kind of springboard to literacy. When the attention of the pupil is eventually drawn to literature itself, and he is required to study it for its 'intrinsic' merit, he is likely to be struck deeply by the fact that literature presents and orders human experience in such a way as to ask, explicitly or implicitly, questions about life's meaning and purpose. He encounters, too, literature's preoccupation with the individual, its fascination with who and what he is, its attempts to find consistency even in his inconsistencies, its struggle to fathom human character.

These nominally 'courageous' pupils, many of them, are susceptible to the literary Weltanschauung, the philosophy of 'anti-courage'. Later adolescence, it is often agreed, is a time for questioning life, for

analysing the self. It is the impetus for many a crude teleological inquiry. In response to the message of literature, the schoolchild becomes an acolyte of literature and the philosophy of 'anti-courage'. He is not necessarily 'creative' or 'artistic' himself, and his understanding of the credo of literature may be obscure. Yet he embraces it with faith and trust as a disciple, a follower, replete with all the doubts and hesitancies attendant on those orders. In that moment he breaks faith with his old world, the 'courageous' world which will not put itself to address his confusions. He makes the gestures of renunciation - secret gestures, which go unnoticed.

4 The clash between the acolyte and the world

The disparity between the outlooks of the 'courageous' world (into which our acolyte is born) and the new 'anti-courageous' world (through which he is born again) should now be clear. The world of 'courage' insists that we should not look for meaning in life, but simply live. It counsels us to forego self-examination because there is nothing fixed about us to examine. We continually 'evolve', literally by accident. The 'anti-courageous' world

rejects all of this. It urges us to examine life for meaning. We must also examine ourselves, our fixed reality, our 'character'.

Thus, the new acolyte of literature, the disciple of 'anti-courage', finds himself at odds with the 'courageous' world. However, as we have said already, he is in no position to challenge the 'courageous' world - he is a disciple, a follower, a beginner. He is therefore an impotent and absurd figure in the world of 'courage', constantly in rebellion, generally ineffectual, against it. He is curiously alienated, in the Marxist sense of the word, from the 'courageous' world. He is cut off from a world he once belonged to, yet this alienation does not carry with it the emotional freedom from that world that we might expect. On the contrary, his conscience reminds him of all he owes to the 'courageous' world: he rebels against it, not as a freedom fighter against a dictator, but as a child against a parent.

It is left to him to find a way of freeing himself from these emotional bonds. With this in mind he turns towards the further study of literature, this time at the University.

5 What the acolyte of literature expects from the University

For the acolyte of literature, the University and its teachings seem to offer a great deal. He seeks refuge therein for several reasons. Firstly, he expects to discover a sense of 'anti-courageous' community to fortify him in his opposition to the 'courageous' world. Secondly, he seeks the benefit of the University's legitimising power: through its authority he will be equipped to do battle with the world of 'courage' and convince it, from his new and lofty height, of its mistaken approach to living. Thirdly, he relishes the intensive exploration of the self and life that he imagines the University will offer - explorations deemed pointless by the apparently prosaic 'courageous' world.

As an acolyte of literature, he expects to find himself among its priests, at whose feet he can learn. What he seeks most of all to learn is how literature can help him to live.. and to live more abundantly. Literature for him is a means to an end. He has not approached it with a detached interest, desiring knowledge of it for its 'intrinsic' value, but treats literature as a medium through which he may discover answers to his

questions about the world and himself. Literature is for him not an art but an engine, through which may be accomplished great things. Thus, he gathers his papers together and takes his place expectantly in the lecture hall and seminar room.

6 What the acolyte receives from the University

The University appears to accept the acolyte's enthusiasm for literature as a guide to the meaning of living and the nature of man. Its rhetoric often suggests this notion. Indeed, the University proposes to show the acolyte that man is far more complex than has hitherto been imagined, and suggests an exploration of that complexity. This seems perfectly in accord with the student-acolyte's intentions, and so he is happy to go along with this.

But the University uses this proposed exploration to manipulate the acolyte out of his 'anti-courageous' position and propel him back towards the philosophy of 'courage'. The University declares that man is 'great-souled': there is far more to him than the student acolyte ever expected. But the University paints a picture of 'great-souled' man in nihilistic

terms. Through the study of literature it illustrates his perversity, his befuddled and contradictory mysticism, his spiritual rootlessness and the pleasure he finds in his own suffering. It then holds up this creature to the bemused acolyte and questions whether it is, after all, possible to understand man through literature. Is he not, in the end, inexplicable, unaccountable? Would it not be better to abandon the search for him? Perhaps we should instead treat literature for what it is - a discipline rather than a credo. Let us not place upon it the burden of explaining life and ourselves.

Daunted, the acolyte crumbles, and renounces the belief that he may through literature understand life and himself. In so doing, he becomes alienated (in the Brechtian sense) from literature, shaken free of his emotional attachment to it. There seems nothing to do but to return to the world of 'courage'. But he cannot go back.

7 The apostate from 'anti-courage' and his entry into teaching

The acolyte of literature, who once aspired to be its prophet, has become now its apostate. He can no

longer lend credence to the literary claims that life has meanings which may be sought, and that individuals have realities deserving exploration. Yet his only philosophic recourse, a return to the 'courageous' world, is denied him. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, he was never satisfied, intuitively, with the outlook of the 'courageous' world. He snatched gratefully at an alternative. This alternative exploded, how may he return wholeheartedly to a world found unsatisfactory to begin with? Secondly, he has not been shocked out of his belief in the philosophy of 'anti-courage' so much as delivered from his confidence in it. His problem is the Christian's problem: he has conviction, but faith is the difficulty. Thirdly, he has not forgotten the pleasure and sense of purpose afforded him by the literary Weltanschauung, associated as it is with a crucial stage in his emotional development, as detailed above.

Thus, he finds himself in a philosophic limbo: rejecting 'anti-courage', but reluctantly, and never entirely; accepting the 'courageous' outlook, but halfheartedly, and never completely. Thus,

profoundly confused about living, he drifts back to a place which has associations with a happier time. He returns, as teacher, to the secondary schoolroom. He returns to literature - not to behold the Godhead (to find in literature confirmation of his once-cherished outlook).. but to look at the Sphinx (to consider literature bemusedly and wonder at what was once its significance for him).

He enters teacher training college, and is duly confirmed as a teacher.

8 The apostate's response to the teaching task

We noted above that the novice teacher of English enters the school without a clear philosophy of life. He is preoccupied, primarily, not with what it is to be a teacher but with what it is to be a man. He finds himself compelled to return to the classroom, fascinated still by literature and its impact upon him, despite the fact that he no longer views the 'anti-courageous' outlook as a credible one, for reasons discussed above. His spiritual situation is not appreciated by the school, since he is not required to achieve as a teacher but merely to function. To satisfy his masters and his pupils

he need not display passion or commitment, but merely nominal responsibility.

The teacher-apostate's philosophic confusion, and the 'pragmatic' outlook of the school, have a dual effect upon him. The first creates in him a sense of clinical alienation from his teaching task; the second provides that alienation with an environment. When I speak of the teacher as 'clinically alienated' from his teaching task, I mean that he treats it as entirely unimportant. Its value, like the value of wearing clothes to a demented man, entirely escapes him. Thus, like his fellow teachers, who have abandoned their once dearly held literary credo and exist now in the school as a mutual reproach to one another, he turns himself into a caricature of a teacher. He presents himself in 'bad faith' as a pedagogue, an educator, parodying his supposed function as teacher. In his desperation and confusion - over life, rather than teaching - he has, significantly, become the teacher, fulfilling to the point of absurdity all the forms expected of him, without ever becoming a teacher, genuinely committed to his task.

9 The teacher-apostate and his pupils

Critics may call into question the whole of my account of the teacher's 'progressive' alienation on the basis of the following notion. If the teacher - as a man - is as profoundly alienated as I suggest he is, then this would preclude the possibility of 'positive personal relationships' between teachers and pupils, relationships without which a teacher could never hope to retain in the classroom even a semblance of order and co-operation. The fact that school life continues reasonably free of disruption suggests that the idea of the supremely alienated teacher is a myth: such a person could never hope to establish the relationships upon which even the most pedestrian of teaching depends.

In reply to this anticipated criticism I proposed that teachers alienated as I suggest may function in the classroom, at least nominally, without the 'personal relationships' described above. The teacher-apostate maintains his 'hold' over his pupils and ensures their co-operation in two ways. First, he fascinates his pupils by his arresting 'teacher-personality', the result of his absurd parody of the teaching task. Thus, he is what every pupil pessimistically expects of his teacher.

Secondly, a much more profound influence, he inspires in his pupils a religious sense of his own pain: there is something amiss with him, something that compels his pupils' loyalty and support. He does not require to be liked. He may in fact be resented. Yet, as we are sometimes commanded by a sick man for whom we feel no personal sympathy, so the teacher's pupils are bound to and directed by him. Such control is predicated on no ordinary liberal relationship between teacher and pupils, but on the manipulation, conscious if not deliberate, of the little-explored religious sensibility of the young.

10 The value of 'anti-courage'

With the account above of the relationship between teacher and pupils, our examination of the spiritual condition of the teacher of English is complete. My sixth and penultimate chapter is concerned with a critical appraisal of the 'new' philosophy of 'anti-courage', a philosophy which finds expression through literature and which insists that living should be examined for significance, and the individual scrutinized for what he is. Such a criticism of 'anti-courage' is important insofar as

it questions the wisdom of a blind crusade against the world of 'courage', and militates against an unthinkingly self-righteous attitude on the part of the 'anti-courageous'.

I considered first the advantages of the 'anti-courageous' outlook, presenting it as a very old and demonstrably orthodox way of interpreting experience. A case was made for its value to the individual in terms of encouraging the development of his moral awareness and aspirations beyond the level of the purely mundane. It has, in short, elevating properties. Again, I indicated possible weaknesses in the 'anti-courageous' outlook and its meaning-hungry, self-regarding elements. It may encourage a destructive narcissism, a morbid sensitivity and a rejection of the real for the ideal to the point where life itself is decried and abominated. I concluded with the idea that the 'anti-courageous' philosophy requires, like any philosophy, to be harnessed constructively and with a sharp awareness of its dangers and limitations as much as its advantages.

IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS, FURTHER ISSUES

Having presented what I trust is a succinct and useful restatement of my argument, it is important that we expand upon the implications of that argument. There are three issues in particular which I feel deserve attention, each raised by the account provided of the disastrous alienation of the teacher of English estranged from the world, from literature and from himself. In what follows, I suggest that the extremity of the teacher's alienation greatly reduces his ability to teach effectively a subject of crucial importance to the lives of his pupils. I suggest further that the extremity of his alienation is a moral insult to him as an educated person, and that it conceivably denies us benefits which we might derive from him, were his alienation less extreme than is the case, and were he able to harness his disaffection and provide through it an original interpretation of his own experience and a salutary criticism of the world.

Let us consider, first, what we expect, ideally, from the teacher of English. If we may return briefly to the ideas of the distinguished theorists discussed in the preface to this work, certain interesting points arise in this respect. For Margaret Mathieson, the teacher of English needs to be able to transmit his subject with an appropriate awareness of its definite potential to shape

the values of pupils coming into contact with it. From the account provided above of the teacher's relationship with his discipline, we may suggest that he, the reluctant apostate from an intensely emotional appreciation of literature, may well be ill-suited to this task of balanced and dispassionate monitoring, and to the task of regularly appraising the moral impact of literature and language on the child. It is difficult to see how the teacher develops the detached perspective necessary for it. As we have said above, the alienated teacher is caught up relentlessly in himself and his own philosophic confusions with regard to literature. How confidently may we think of him fulfilling the role described above?

If this is the case, then we may only suppose that the teaching of English in the classroom remains a haphazard affair, with little or no analysis on the teacher's part as to the aims of teaching English. This is a lamentable situation, but one that is logical if one accepts the account provided of the alienated condition of the teacher of English. The patent rejection by many teachers of any attempt to inform by theory their 'practical' approach to teaching is usually attributed to a healthy anti-intellectualism. This explanation succeeds only in attributing to the teacher an

unconsidered denigration of theory, an unreflective obstinacy and a tendency to self-righteousness that scarcely flatter him. Friends of the teacher are justified in looking further for an account of his 'anti-theoretical' bias.

If Mathieson's vision of the teacher of English is undermined by our hypotheses concerning his alienation, then so too is Inglis'. Inglis, in an admirable intuition, demands from the teacher of English sympathy with literature and the humane values it embodies. Thus armed, he may lead his pupils to a restored sense of those values, and through those pupils achieve the recovery of our civilisation. It is a splendid prospect, but a prospect never to be realised through the alienated teacher of English. True, he once believed in those same humane values, but through his University education has come to doubt them, making instead a futile effort to return to the 'courageous' world. Such a teacher may not fulfil Inglis' vision. And if Inglis' vision remains that only, what is likely to be the impact, generally, of literature on school pupils, who are the potential recoverers of our humanity? It seems likely that, untutored, they will see literature as being possessed of instrumental value only, useful for the passing of examinations but otherwise of negligible value. Their

education is then reduced to the assimilation of a set of meaningless esoteric symbols, an assimilation followed by rote regurgitation. This is a phenomenon we readily abominate - yet tolerate.

As with Mathieson's and Inglis' visions of the teacher of English, so with Abbs'. For Abbs, the teacher must possess the ability literally to become inspired by literature, interpreting what for many pupils must seem its enthusiastic but 'alien' concerns: its quest for the self and values absolute. Once interpreted, however, these concerns may become meaningful and relevant to pupils, encouraging them to explore their own lives and experience.

Certainly, our alienated teacher of English began with enthusiasms similar to those recognised by Abbs, but has learned to see literature as a discipline rather than a credo. He believes it unable to cast light on man's nature, which is absurdly complex, inexplicable, unfathomable. If, the teacher of English is unable to take up the role of interpreter described above, it is likely that his pupils will see literature and its introspective questioning for ever cold on the page. They will judge its concerns as far removed from those of 'real' life, and lack the necessary impetus to examine

how literature may inform their understanding and increase their appreciation of life. We are already disposed to degrade moral and existential insight to the level of a magic art - a disposition clearly encouraged by our inability to communicate in the classroom the concerns of literature.

Thus, in tolerating the extreme alienation of the teacher of English, we unwittingly conspire against the emergence of the teacher of English we consider ideal, and lose thereby the benefits of the presence of such an educator in the classroom. Realising this, we are provided with one incentive for attempting to arrest somehow the philosophic catastrophe suffered by the teacher. But there are other incentives to this end.

Just as the teacher's philosophic catastrophe denies us what we expect ideally from the teacher of English, so it denies him much that we consider valuable in an educated person. Without attempting a comprehensive definition of what it is to be educated, there are several markers to which we often refer on this question, markers which will help us in our appraisal of the harm done to the teacher of English in the course of his higher education in literature.

Independence of judgement may safely be considered one of the key qualities of an educated individual, the ability to critically appraise issues admitting of no easy solution. Yet the alienated teacher of English may not attain to this. He has had his judgement on the whole question of living systematically undermined in his University education, and has attempted, unsuccessfully, to embrace uncritically the philosophy of 'courage', out of fear and confusion rather than on the basis of any reasoned decision. He feels his previous deliberations were vanity, and, returning as he does to the outer limits of the 'courageous' world, asks, pathetically and hopelessly, to be told what to do, what to think, what to feel. Critical ability is not so much a faculty as an attitude. It must be encouraged before it may be developed. Once developed we absurdly suppose it indestructible, an aggressive, independent, fearless 'entity'. As history bears out, however, it is more easily perverted, suppressed and destroyed than we care to imagine. In this moral insult is the first offence against the teacher of English.

Yet there are other offences to be considered. If, in attempting an uncritical return to the world of 'courage', the teacher surrenders his independence of judgement, then with the explosion of his original

literary credo he is struck the grievous blow of having his power of intuition declared spurious. It is difficult to imagine ourselves without a certain confidence in our intuitive insight, informed by our studies, into living. This is often held to be one of the greatest benefits of a liberal education, conferring on us the power to seize ideas that we may not readily approach, and come to a more profound understanding of other men. The acolyte of literature, his power of intuition sharply challenged in his progress through the world, loses confidence in his mysterious ability to know, and in that loss is stripped of a quality that allowed him once a subtle comprehension of a world increasingly bewildering. Bereft of the offices of the individual's power of intuition, education's 'broadening' impact on our intellect and imagination lacks the synthesizing element necessary if it is to edify rather than merely inform.

Yet, added to the loss of critical ability and faith in intuition, is a further loss. One spiritually important outcome of a liberal education is the opportunity it affords us to make progress in terms of our personal philosophy of life. Through becoming educated, we begin to see the world in new and fuller terms, and break away from that vision predicated on our temperament,

circumstances or prejudices. Yet this possibility is denied the teacher of English, alienated as he is. He has suffered the loss of two worlds - the world of 'anti-courage' and the world of 'courage'. Able to belong to neither he is, as we have said, in a philosophic limbo or fixed in a kind of spiritual amber. Progress for him is impossible. He has no longer any vision to refine. The world for him is a confusion which he cannot fathom. He is fated to cross and cross again barren philosophic terrain, there being no possibility of comprehension or illumination.

And if his alienation forces the teacher of English to abandon all notion of philosophic and spiritual progress, what has he then to offer future generations? For surely, in becoming educated, we hope to be able to transmit something of worth to those who follow us, if only to let posterity know that our lives and thoughts were not, as they so easily might have been, entirely futile. For the teacher of English, there can be no thesaurus of experience to be handed down, but only a jumbled assortment of pain and confusion, useless to all but those with an interest in the varieties of spiritual disappointment.

Desiderata such as those we have outlined are significant especially for our concept of a liberal education. In our aims for and expectations of it, we have outstripped Plato's guardian, Castiglione's courtier and Dewey's social automaton. But the fact that we have aimed so high does not and should not excuse our failures, apparent in this instance in the condition of the apostate from literature.

The extremity of the alienation of the teacher of English results, as we have said, in a sad diminution of his standing as an educated individual, just as it renders him, as a teacher, impotent in the classroom. Yet should our demand be that steps be taken to avoid the teacher's alienation in its entirety? If we cast our minds back to the process of the teacher's alienation, we will note that it is engendered initially by his encounter with literature and its values which are opposed to the outlook of what we chose to call the 'courageous' world. At that point, the teacher might be said to be in possession of a tool which would allow him to produce a telling critique of the world he lived in, feeling himself dynamically set apart from the 'courageous' world he was born into. Certainly, he never has the opportunity for this, as the impact of the University and his teaching experience soon reduces him to an impotent,

agonized figure hovering absurdly between two worlds. But what if he were encouraged in his initial alienation? It may be the case that alienation is a creative spiritual condition which can produce much that is of value in terms of a criticism of the world and its shortcomings. Is there anything in this idea? Consideration of some sort is required, if we are to recommend the encouragement of a certain element of alienation, in the Marxist sense of feeling oneself irrevocably isolated in and out of sympathy with one's world, in the teacher of English.

Alienation can be understood as the principle behind much humane enquiry. Let us consider first the spur it may give to works of the imagination. If we seek an apt example of an individual dynamically alienated from the world in which he lived, then we need look no further than poet and visionary William Blake. Blake's imaginative flights, often compared (though not often happily) to those of Emanuel Swedenborg, led him to create no mere fantasy world or escapist dream designed to ward off the pains of existence. Through admittedly esoteric metaphors he criticized, in penetrating fashion, the philosophy of living of his time, interpreting for us our ideas of love, possessions and religion, at the same time providing a critique of our newly-industrialised

world. It is significant for us that Blake felt that in order to achieve our full potential as human beings we must invent our own system of thought, or risk imprisonment in the systems of others. Such systems moral and political that we might devise need not be predicated on 'vested interest'. The alienation which would provide their impetus may generate, as with Blake, a more generous moral vision.

While Blake laboured to show us what was amiss with the world, Van Gogh, similarly alienated by his creative imagination, worked instead to show us a world replete with beauty and mystery so often neglected by us in our prosaic approach to living. Had not Van Gogh felt himself set apart from ordinary living and its assumptions, his attempt to help us once again to see poetically would never have been made, and the recovery of our poetic and 'mythic' vision rendered harder than it is. Such vision is, in a secular age, no aesthetic luxury, but a philosophic necessity. Man requires still the perception of a unifying principle in life.

But alienation may have other fruits, encouraging the development of philosophies we now take as the starting points for argument. Who was more 'constructively' alienated than Plato? The generation of his Republic did

not depend upon the elaboration of received 'sophistical' ideas, but on their outright rejection. His imagination threw up bizarre men of gold and silver and bronze who bore the grandest and at the same time most challenging of political philosophies. Western philosophy, it is often agreed, is characterized by doubt and searching. It seems feasible, therefore, to attribute many of its fruits to the dynamic alienation of its authors.

Alienation may lead, too, to profound religious insights. This is borne out in, for example, the autobiography of Saint Teresa, whose alienation from and disgust at the world afforded her eventually the illumination of that world. Yet described above are only the most spectacular creative possibilities of alienation. Dynamic and critical alienation, albeit on a lower level than the above, may inspire and inform much of what is valuable in satire and the entertaining, if often bitter, criticism of social mores. The value and potential of alienation in all of these respects lead us to imagine the teacher of English, alienated only from the 'courageous' world and not from literature and himself, as a potential critic, in the classroom and outside it, of our civilisation. Perhaps then he may fulfil, in particular, the prophecies and visions of Abbs and Inglis.

But, having made a tentative case for the value of a certain element of alienation in the teacher of English, what recommendations may be offered in order to arrest the progress of the teacher's present alienation before it goes beyond the stage at which it may be considered useful and productive? What, in other words, must be done to transform an anchorite into a prophet? Again, such recommendations may only be tentative, but I believe we may offer several suggestions concerning the attitudes of educational institutions to the teacher's initial and valuable alienation.

First of all, steps need to be taken, at the level of the secondary school, to ensure that the new acolyte's discovery of the 'anti-courageous' Weltanschauung in the literature he studies is supported by the experience of wiser heads than his, and that he does not give his allegiance secretly to it, and without a clear awareness of that philosophy's potential impact on his spiritual life. Because of the veiled and secret way in which literature communicates itself to the receptive individual, he will tend to feel himself the only one thus spoken to, or imagine himself belonging to a mysteriously existing elect. This is scarcely conducive to a balanced appreciation of his new and wonderful situation. Further, because of the scintillating but

diffuse philosophy of literature, it is likely that the new acolyte of literature will grasp literature's concerns at first only obscurely. He will, too, be ignorant of the potential impact that this philosophy may have on his appreciation of life and his understanding of himself. In all of this is a recipe for his later philosophic disaster, when the ideals he clings to, with only the benefit of a vague and intuitive conviction to support him, are challenged in his University education.

Hence, the acolyte needs to become acquainted, before he leaves the secondary school, with the following things. He requires to know, first of all, that he is not alone in his apprehensions of literature's significance. It must be made clear to him that his new position is a recognised one, but that it jars in many respects with the philosophy of the world in which he lives. Again, the nature of the conflict between the 'courageous' and the 'anti-courageous' worlds must be described and taught, their differing positions clearly established and systematically analysed. Thus, the new acolyte of literature will be in a stronger position to defend, if only to himself, his new and heartfelt credo, and will have at the same time a grasp of the difficulties he may encounter in upholding it.

The secondary schools' success in such an endeavour would require a new interest in and concern for the inner lives of their pupils. While such a sensibility seems unlikely at the present time, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility. Already the nineteenth-century 'industrial' model of the school, and the neglect of human personality attendant on that model, have been widely challenged. If we are optimistic, we may anticipate the emergence of an institutionally recognised philosophy of education capable of grasping clearly the impact a curriculum may have on the psyche of those to whom it is delivered. In such a climate the feasibility of appropriately educating the 'anti-courageous' in the way described above becomes considerably more obvious. The only shadow cast upon this picture is the present gearing of education to the presence of increasingly sophisticated technology in the schools. It remains to be seen which will gain ascendancy in the schools - personality or capability.

We turn now to the role of the University in the acolyte's higher education in literature. First of all, the University requires to reacquaint itself with its own rhetoric on what it is to learn or wish to learn. Its rhetoric allows the possibility that an individual may approach learning, not simply with a view to acquiring it as an intrinsically valuable possession, but in order to

glean from it an answer, however indirect, to the problem of how to live. This attempt implies in man a capacity for mystical apprehension, a feeling that, in order to live fully - that is, spiritually as well as materially - he requires to know. His is a quest, with all the religious implications inherent in that term, for understanding.

If the University must reacquaint itself with this idea in order to understand the acolyte of literature, who arrives seeking knowledge in this very fashion, then it must, with the same end in mind, jettison such unofficial notions of the student as obstruct the required understanding. It must abandon first the notion of the student as 'cynical sociologist', according to which the student values his University education only insofar as it can bring him money or social 'significance'. It must question, too, the subtler notion that the student, particularly of the Arts, seeks through his University education only to modify himself, to become by dint of enthusiastic immersion in the achievements of 'high culture' something grander than he was, rather than to discover himself and address thereby the issues of living.

Thus prepared, the University should extend to the acolyte of literature a willingness to consider his eleutherian views on the subject, without compromising its obligation to enable him to understand literature as a discipline as well as a credo. The two approaches need not be mutually exclusive: reference to scholar-poets such as Robert Graves bears this out. Whence Graves' White Goddess, if not from 'anti-courageous' intuition as much as painstaking scholarship? (Certainly, not every one of their number attains to Graves' achievement - one is reminded of Housman's thirty year preoccupation with Manilius, which involved the sacrifice of his inspired interpretations of Propertius - but the ideal remains and may be realised.) The acolyte, in his turn, would experience no longer the confusion and despair engendered at present by his time at University.

This release would be the result of both the new sympathetic attitude of the University, and the acolyte's training, while still at school, in the philosophic implications of his credo. He would be able to retain his faith in the literary Weltanschauung, yet be capable of recognising different approaches to 'his' literature, and thereby amplifying his appreciation of it.

Just as there are signs of change in the schools which may lead them to the provision of an environment encouraging the proposed direction and education of the 'anti-courageous' acolytes of literature, so the University has, slowly, begun to enter upon a position which would assist the acolytes' higher education along the lines indicated. That the Universities show presently an increasing awareness of the fact that their students do not all share the same values and outlook, nor share necessarily the values of the Universities, should, in principle, prepare these institutions to reflect more profoundly upon the unusual situation of the acolyte of literature, and be more tolerant and supportive of his aims. He must not, however, be deferred to as a client, but rather recognised and accredited as a philosopher. His acceptance by the University should be principled rather than pragmatic, and magnanimous rather than merely tolerant.

Thus, the intending teacher of English, emerging from the University, begins now to resemble the teacher of Mathieson's, Inglis' and Abbs' ideals. He is, after his year at teacher training college, integrated usefully in our system of education and ready to take up his position in the secondary school, aware of literature's potential as a discipline and, through his salutary alienation from

the 'courageous' world, able to harness literature in criticism of that world.

But all of this, my critic suggests, is less a feasible prescription for change than a description of an ideal world. Even with an honest attempt on the part of these institutions to meet your requirements, those at present preparing to teach in the school are scarcely in a position to deal initially with the 'anti-courageous' impulse in their pupils when it arises. Intending teachers are, as a result of their institutional experiences, themselves confused perniciously over literature, abhorring but still fascinated by its subversive insinuations about the world of 'courage'. How may they inculcate in their pupils a balanced appreciation of and important caveats concerning literature's philosophy, and encourage the acolyte to develop the intuitions of his alienation for the benefit of all?

Certainly, this presents a difficulty. Yet there remains one institution, at present relatively passive in the drama of the acolyte's final alienation from literature and himself: the teacher training college. Its effective role in the educational system seems functional rather than ideological. It is content to induct University

graduates into the secondary system, to this end monitoring their initial periods of school experience, and arming them, say the critics of the colleges, with laboured, conventional and consequently effete educational doctrine.

The training college may, however, be able to interrupt the pernicious alienation of the graduate in English, on his way to the secondary schoolroom, by providing him with the opportunity and encouragement to reconsider the philosophic situation which, left unchallenged, results in his eventual desperate caricature of the teacher of English. What are at present long weeks of desultory attention in the college to educational issues might be used to analyse precisely why graduates in English find themselves school-bound. Such an opportunity might help the graduate address the fact that he is not returning to the school on any satisfactory basis, but is school-bound only through a queer mixture of compulsion and nostalgic yearning, the result of his enduring fascination with, yet abhorrence of, the 'anti-courageous' literary outlook. This approach would mean a probable diminution in the status and importance of Pavlov and Piaget, and certainly carries the risk that some graduates would abandon teaching altogether, but it is clearly worth

consideration as a possible way of 'breaking the circle' of the teacher's destructive alienation.

Should the colleges succeed in this task, the way would then be clear for teachers of English, brought to an awareness of the reasons for their philosophic plight and resolving their confusions thereby, to transmit to pupils the necessary protective doctrine concerning the philosophy of 'anti-courage'. There is, then, the potential for recovery.

The critical issue is whether the colleges have the will and the motivation to initiate that recovery. Significant here is the low prestige of the colleges: a situation attributable at least in part to the contempt in which they are often, very vocally, held by graduate students training to be teachers. How better to go some way to recovering that prestige than by attempting honestly to address the philosophic confusions of new apostates from literature, thus proving the colleges, in principle, of moral value to their clients? The colleges' authority is derived from the responsibility delegated to them. Their credibility, depends, however, upon a vital and appropriate interpretation of that same responsibility. To be responsible is to be self-regarding, while to act responsibly is to be other-

regarding. Institutions are, queerly, as prone to narcissism as individuals, with similarly sterile results. On that note, we suspend our speculations, and await the results and insights of much-needed research on the questions and suggestions put tentatively above.

Let us now briefly restate what we have said thus far in our review of the argument of this dissertation. We noted first that the argument presented in the chapters above, and its recapitulation in concise form at the beginning of this final chapter, provided us with a reason for the marked absence of the ideal teachers envisaged by the theorists. We found, too, that the extremity of the teacher's alienation-from literature, the world and himself-was a moral insult to him, and we suggested that his alienation, if only from the world of 'courage', could be a useful and even a noble thing, allowing a new, critical appraisal of our 'courageous' way of life. We suggested, further, ways in which our present educational system could encourage the release of the teacher's potential, and found them feasible in principle.

Having now summarized and reviewed what for the writer are the salient issues of the dissertation, we are left, in conclusion, with the question of where the argument

goes from here. Much of this dissertation has dealt with an examination of those school pupils, later students and teachers, who live 'mythically' - for whom living is a fabulous and mysterious business. In the course of this work I have been able only to sketch the outline of their mythology of life, their admirable pursuit of the point and meaning of existence. In the future I intend to explore more fully that mythology, hopefully uncovering a world which I believe is both rich and luxuriant. Knowledge of this world, again, may be of some use in the development of future notions of pedagogy.

Further questions preoccupy me on this topic. Is the 'anti-courageous' mentality triggered only by what we know conventionally as literature, or may it spring from other, less obvious, sources? Is, for example, the youth cult of 'science-fiction', embracing a cruder but still undeniably mythic and poetic world, in any way related to our 'anti-courageous' acolytes of literature? And what of the world, usually described as 'adolescent', of the superhero and supervillain of the American comic books? Its adherents live heroically, if still more crudely. These are issues seldom explored, yet I feel, intuitively, that there is some connection between these worlds and what we have described already as the world of 'anti-courage'. Should this be the case, then it will

entail further revision of our notion of the divisibility according to concern of cultures 'high' and 'low'. Curricular implications follow.

Secondly, I should like to examine in more detail the negative side of conventional literary 'anti-courage'. As suggested by my sixth chapter, I consider it possible that there is contained within literature a quite exquisite hell for the careless or unwary, as well as great spiritual rewards for those who approach that world circumspectly. But how to explore this? Philosophic misery seldom seeks an audience, and inspires pride as much as despair in the bearer. Perhaps this accounts for the singular ineffectiveness of so much of our endeavour in the field of 'spiritual surgery'.

Less cryptically, there are the issues raised by the nature of the control the supremely alienated teacher of English has over his charges, a control predicated not upon any mutual respect or liking, but upon the manipulation by the teacher of the religious sensibility of his pupils. What of this sensibility, and might it be turned to better and more fruitful use? And if, as the above suggests, there exist ways of keeping order in the classroom which are as psychologically exotic and as morally suspect as the one mooted above, what are they,

and how much of the distaste so many pupils have for school has its roots therein, rather than in a hatred of 'institutionalism', and a feeling that schools offer nothing to their pupils that is relevant in 'real' life? Such explanations are predicated on the assumption that youth is necessarily rebellious-one of the quainter and more romantic educational notions of capitalist democracies. Rebellion implies enthusiasm which itself implies conviction, the latter a phenomenon little in evidence among our certainly disaffected youth.

There is, finally, the bearing that my account of the perniciously alienated teacher of English has on the question of the overall experience of teachers, the study of which is still at a relatively early stage of development. Is the experience of the teacher of English something sui generis, or does it have affinities with that of teachers of other disciplines, who feel something similar for perhaps different-or, indeed, related-reasons? The study of the human experience of any discipline is surely profitable: through it we may increase the efficiency of our system of education, engender more informed pedagogy at all its levels, and aspire to avoid the trauma too often attendant on education entered freely or unwillingly.

Teachers and Prophets:
Literature and Spirit in the Making of
The Secondary Teacher of English
Volume 2

by

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August 1990

c JA Murie 1989 & 1990

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 2

As the reader may have gathered by now, this thesis comprises what is, regularly, something approaching a dual text: the two volumes are intended to be read together. The work is presented in this way for the following reasons.

First, I feel it is important that the assertion, argument and repudiation of the first volume is available in a form relatively unencumbered by notes and afterthought so that my position becomes as clear as possible to the reader, and so that he gets a sense of the emotional immediacy of the piece, vital I believe to its understanding.

Important too, however, is the reading, research and meditative aspect of the thesis: the reader is not simply invited to lose himself on trust in the writer's imagination. Broader vistas open out before us when the purport of the main text in volume one is exposed to both a literature and what we may very broadly designate a philosophic tradition, and this tradition deserves more than the obscurity risked were it to be presented at the end of the completed thesis.

NOTES TO PREFACE

- 1 Mathieson M: The Preachers of Culture Allen & Unwin 1975 p.193.
- 2 Mathieson M: Op.Cit. Ibid.
- 3 Mathieson M: Op.Cit. pp. 197 & 205.
- 4 Mathieson M: Op.Cit. p.210.
- 5 Inglis F: The Englishness of English Teaching Longman 1969 p.22.
- 6 Inglis F: Op.Cit. p.186.
- 7 Inglis F: Ideology and the Imagination Cambridge 1975 p.124.
- 8 Mathieson M: Op.Cit. p.118.
- 9 Inglis F: The Englishness of English Teaching p.42.
- 10 Abbs P: English for Diversity Heinemann 1969 p.37.
- 11 Abbs P: Op.Cit. p.51.
- 12 Abbs P: Op.Cit. p.142.
- 13 Abbs P: Root and Blossom Heinemann 1976 p.148.
- 14 Newman JH: On the Scope and Nature of University Education Everyman p.224.
- 15 Newman JH: Op.Cit. pp.227-228.
- 16 Newman JH: Op.Cit. p.229.

- 17 Newman JH: Op.Cit. Ibid.
- 18 Newman JH: Op.Cit. p.224.
- 19 Leavis FR: Education and the University Chatto & Windus 1972 p.33.
- 20 Thompson D: The Use of English Vol.1 No. 1 Editorial.
- 21 Leavis FR: Op.Cit. p.38.
- 22 Richards IA: Principles of Literary Criticism Kegan Paul 1935 pp.17,78.
- 23 Bergonzi B: Exploding English Oxford 1990 p.26.
- 24 Bergonzi B: Op.Cit. p.25.
- 25 Bergonzi B: Op.Cit. Chapters 5 & 6.
- 26 Wright Mills C: The Sociological Imagination Penguin 1970 pp.9-10.
- 27 Otty N: Learner Teacher Penguin 1980.
- 28 Evans P: The Protest Virus Pitman 1974 p.8.
- 29 Frost R: Collected Poems Longman 1964.
- 30 Poole R: Towards Deep Subjectivity Allen Lane 1974 pp.44-45.
- 31 Bronowski J: Science and Human Values Pelican 1964 pp.23-24.
- 32 Bronowski J: Op.Cit. pp.20-21.

- 33 Bronowski J: Op.Cit. p.23.
- 34 Froebel F: Autobiography Allen & Unwin 1915 p.31.
- 35 Bronowski J: Op.Cit. pp.29-30.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION
(VOLUME ONE)

- 1 Illich I: Deschooling Society Penguin 1971 p.40.
Illich writes from the Marxist perspective, but his observation is supported by more conservative writers.
- 2 Musgrave PW (ed.): Sociology, History and Education Methuen 1970 pp.215-216.
- 3 Bantock GH: Freedom and Authority in Education Faber 1975 p.188.
- 4 Entwistle H: Class, Culture and Education Methuen 1979 p.45.
- 5 Reimer E: School Is Dead Penguin 1971 p.18.
- 6 Cullingford C: Parents, Teachers and Schools Royce 1985 p.11.
- 7 Shipman M: Education as a Public Service Harper & Row 1984 p.141.
- 8 Chambers JH: The Achievement of Education Harper & Row 1983 p.144.

Chambers' concern with compulsion is predicated on his insistence that ideas must be forcibly and systematically 'instilled' in children for them to grow up to be 'autonomous'. A dubious position?

- 9 Hight G: The Art of Teaching Methuen 1986 p.10.
- 10 Kellas JG: Modern Scotland Pall Mall 1968 p.98.
- 11 London County Council: Punishment In Schools May 1952 p.6.
- 12 Partridge J: Life In A Secondary Modern School Pelican 1968 pp.30-31.
- 13 Hannam C, Smyth P and Stephenson N: The First Year of Teaching Penguin 1976 p.221.
- 14 Shaw B: Comprehensive Schooling: The Impossible Dream? Blackwell 1983 p.103.
Shaw is an Arch Conservative; Hoyle, following, is considerably more liberal. The two are juxtaposed to demonstrate the high degree of agreement on this subject.
- 15 Hoyle E: The Role of The Teacher RKP 1969 p.45.

16 Musgrave PW: The School As An Organisation Macmillan
1969 p.63.

17 Waller W: The Sociology of Teaching Wiley & Sons
1967 p.42.

Even taking Waller's American context into account, where educational ideals are at the same time more cynical and more starry-eyed than in our own, this sums up the attitude presently taken to the teacher's spiritual condition.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1 Melville H: Typee and Billy Budd Everyman 1963
pp.276-278 'Billy Budd'.

2 As opposed to, for example, Hilton's Mr Chips
(Hilton J: Goodbye Mr Chips Hodder & Stoughton
1934).

The teacher as Handsome Sailor might be held to have
affinities in this respect with Jules Henry's
'Puckish Father', described in great detail in
Culture Against Man (Henry J: Culture Against Man
Hutchinson 1966). The 'Puckish Father', who delights
his children by his new fun-loving nature, is
similarly experienced as young, just as the
Victorian father was accordingly perceived as aged
by his offspring.

3 Rousseau JJ: Emile Everyman 1957 p.5.

4 See Stanley AP: The Life of Thomas Arnold Hutchinson
1903 (passim).

5 See Norwood C: The English Tradition of Education
John Murray 1929 Ch.2.

- 6 Lawrence DH: Fantasia of the Unconscious Heinemann 1935 pp.117-129.
- 7 Balzac HD: Seraphita and Other Stories Macmillan 1901 p.118 'Seraphita'.
Contrast Balzac HD: Le Medecin De Compagne Macmillan 1901, in which the main character attempts to re-educate his subjects according to his own lights.
- 8 Melville H: Op.Cit. pp.279-280.
- 9 Hight G: The Art of Teaching Methuen 1956 pp.246-247.
- 10 This was Socrates' ideal, as I understand it.
- 11 Taylor J: Holy Living and Dying Bell & Sons 1891 p.393.
The teacher as Handsome Sailor in this respect is, in a manner of speaking, a profoundly pious Thomas a Kempis who has found the courage to finally quit his famous corner (see Kempis T: The Imitation of Christ Penguin 1978).
- 12 Melville H: Op.Cit. pp.281-282 and pp.283-286.

It may strike the reader here that, in his 'innocent' aspect, our teacher as Handsome Sailor bears some resemblance to Dostoevsky's glorious Idiot (Dostoevsky F: The Idiot Penguin 1978). In fact, he is essentially unlike the anarchic Prince and is perhaps most usefully thought of as a conservative ingenu, despite his mystique, as the text goes on to suggest.

- 13 Melville H: Op.Cit. pp.290-293.
- 14 See Mouzelis NP: Organisation and Bureaucracy RKP 1971, and Cockburn A and Blackburn R (eds.): Student Power Penguin 1969 (Blackburn R: 'A Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology').
- 15 Eliot TS: Murder In the Cathedral Faber 1974 p.41.
- 16 Rousseau JJ: Confessions Penguin 1978 pp.114-115.
This combination of the pragmatic and the contemplative does not reduce the teacher as Pragmatic Hero to the level of a figure of fun, as it does Daudet's Tartarin - Sancho Panza and Don Quixote rolled into one absurd and self-contradictory figure (Daudet A: Tartarin of Tarascon and Tartarin in the Alps Everyman). The teacher as

Pragmatic Hero's practical and mystical aspects combine to create a complex and essentially mysterious character and pose. The sophistication of the teacher as Pragmatic Hero's stance is best illustrated by counterpoint. Here, for example, is Victor Hugo's simply motivated 'crude dignitary', related to, but a world away from, our character:

'This man was a compound of two very simple and relatively excellent feelings, but which he almost rendered bad by exaggerating them - respect for authority and hatred of rebellion.. He enveloped in a species of blind faith everybody in the service of the State.. He covered with contempt, aversion, and disgust every one who had once crossed the legal threshold of evil. He was absolute, and admitted of no exceptions; on one side he said: "A functionary cannot be mistaken, a magistrate can do no wrong," on the other he said: "They are irremediably lost: no good can come of them." He fully shared the opinion of those extreme minds that attribute to the human law some power of making or verifying demons, and that place a Styx at the bottom of society. He was stoical, stern, and austere; a sad dreamer, and humble, yet haughty, like all fanatics.. He had introduced the straight line into what is the most tortuous thing in the world.. and done it with that sort of inner satisfaction which virtue produces.'

(Hugo V: Les Miserables Collins 1940 Ch.23.)

- 17 Melville H: Op.Cit. pp.294-297 and 302-304.

Melville's telling account of 'natural depravity' is vulgarised in Christian psychiatrist M Scott Peck's recent People of the Lie (Peck MS: People of the Lie Rider 1988). Therein, 'natural depravity' becomes simple wickedness, announced by 'reptilian' characteristics in the bearer. More credible, though still a crude model for our teacher as Alien Personality or Hostile Consciousness, is Camus' Mersault, an amoral aesthete introspective (Camus A: A Happy Death Penguin 1978).

- 18 Frost R: Selected Poems Penguin 1981 'Paul's Wife'.

- 19 A further, albeit more simplistic, literary parallel may be adduced in the attempt to illuminate all three of our putative 'ideal types' of teacher. In Tolstoy's parable The Penitent Sinner, the teacher as Hostile Consciousness or Alien Personality might be represented as the guilt-bound self-immolating St. Peter; the teacher as Pragmatic Hero as the power-bound King David; and the beatific teacher as Handsome Sailor as the love-bound St. John, the last the only properly generous agent in the life of the 'pupil-penitent' (Tolstoy L: 'The Penitent Sinner')

in Master and Man Dent 1977).

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1 Tillich P: The Courage to Be Fontana 1970 pp.45-47.

2 Tillich P: Op.Cit. p.49.

3 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.51-53.

4 Tillich P: Op.Cit. p.53.

5 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.54-55.

6 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.58-59.

Tillich's account of man's problem has affinities
with Mackenzie's account of 'moral courage':

'The first attempt to define precisely moral courage was.. when.. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen.. laid down in an essay: "Moral courage is readiness to expose oneself to suffering or inconvenience which does not affect the body." ..Moral courage would be too assertive a claim for an expression of opinion or a course of action which merely led to interference with one's personal comfort and ease.' (Mackenzie C: On Moral Courage Collins 1962 p.12

7 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.89-92.

8 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.93-104.

9 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.110-111.

Strong echoes of this philosophy are to be found in Trevelyan's account of history's fascination:

'History is read by different people for various reasons; it has many uses and values. To me its chief.. value is poetic. Its poetic value depends on its being a true record of actual happenings in the past.. And apart from [the] consecration by time which envelops all the past, so many of the things which history reveals belong by their own nature to the stuff of poetry, the passions and aspirations of men and even of nations, their dramatic failures and successes, the action of chance the disposer, the wonderful creativeness of men, the brief life of his best creations and hopes and systems, above all his indomitable spirit, always beaten down and rising again in some new.. form. As a great poem, as an epic without beginning or end, I read History and never tire.'
(Trevelyan GM: 'Stray Thoughts on History' in An Autobiography and Other Essays Longman 1949 p.82.)

It is important to recognise at this point that Tillich's man is accepting in principle a life-situation considerably more uncertain than the pattern of stages and relationships dreamed of by Gorky's innocent, Ilya:

'Over his bed he hung a picture called "The Phases of a Man's Life". He was fond of this picture.. The "Phases of a Man's Life" were illustrated on an arc, under which was a representation of paradise. ..There were altogether seventeen

phases. The first one showed a baby supported by its mother, and under it was written: "Learning to Walk". The second showed a small child dancing and beating a drum, and the title was: "Five years old: Playtime". ..At twenty-one he stood with a rifle in his hand, and a smile on his lips: "Military Service".. Later on he was being led by the arm for he was now eighty years old. In the last picture, at the age of ninety, he was sitting in an armchair with his feet in a coffin, and Death, scythe in hand, was standing behind his chair.

Ilya enjoyed sitting at the table and studying this picture, in which man's life was divided into such clear, neat phases. The picture emanated tranquillity, and its bright colours seemed to smile, as if assuring all who looked at it that life was herein depicted wisely and truthfully, for the edification of mankind.' (Gorky M: The Three Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp.331-333.)

Nor is the principle accepted that adduced by playwright John Osborne in his explanation of the philosophy of his own extended family:

'..They were enjoined to their own past and a little with the present, in so far as it affected their comfort and prospect. Recall was minute, examination perfunctory. They were like actors in a long run. The past held little mystery, the present only passing interest. As for the future, it was something to be dismissed with some holy satisfaction. "I shan't be here to see it."' (Osborne J: A Better Class of Person Faber & Faber 1981 p.15.)

10 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.114-123 for other forms of
'the courage to be as oneself'.

11 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.124-125.

12 Tillich P: Op.Cit. pp.152-153.

While it will presently become apparent that the idea of 'the courage to be' as a religion is not a strong one, it is worth noting that a great many accounts of man in the West represent his present spiritual condition purely in terms of his desire for peace and personal freedom, the less scrupulous 'propagandizing' Christian accounts most of all. (See, for example, Shaeffer FA: How Should We Then Live: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture Fleming H Revell 1976). So far as 'secular' popular accounts are concerned, Charles Morgan's is representative:

'What are men, freed from destitution, to do with their freedom? Is it their principal purpose to raise the Common Man a little further above subsistence level? And then a little further? And then further still? In brief, is the purpose of living an increasing measure of comfort, physical safety and regimented amenities? Is that all?' (Morgan C: 'The Uncommon Man' in Reflections In a Mirror Vol.1 Macmillan 1944 p.154.)

Belloc adds a curious and unique twist to the spiritual-state-of-Western-man debate in his money fantasy The Mercy of Allah (see discussion in Wilson AN: Hilaire Belloc Hamilton 1984 pp.262-263), in which Belloc attributes man's confidence in the future to the commercial confidence that a capitalist economy requires and inspires. It is a mock-serious explanation, but consistent with the others mentioned insofar as it assumes that man presently lacks spiritual depth. More sympathetic than any of these accounts, though in the eyes of some most grandly patronising, is Galsworthy's Demos (Galsworthy J: Demos in A Commentary Heinemann 1923), in which the Man in the Street answers in reply to all questions of point and purpose put to him the same words: "I am a lost dog."

In fairness, a few recent accounts have tended to be rather more sophisticated than the above. It is interesting to note that Muggeridge, an 'intellectual' Christian, seems, despite his initial protestations, to give expression to Tillich's idea of an underlying religious element in the 'accumulative' philosophy of life:

'We've got a notion today that people must be optimistic, that people must think everything's going to turn out well. This is a very new and quite fallacious view of life. I think it

is utterly ridiculous for an individual to think that through his appetites, living as a mortal man on this earth, he can be happy. ..If, however, I've taken a negative view tactically, strategically I've always assumed, and feel more than ever as I grow older, an intense optimism. In other words it seems to me that life is good, and that in some mysterious way the experience of living can only be of benefit to the individual and to all life of which he's a part. Exactly how this is, of course, one doesn't understand..' (Muggeridge M: 'An Interview with Myself' in Muggeridge Through the Microphone BBC 1967 p.14.)

- 13 See Taylor MK: Paul Tillich: Theologian of the Boundaries Collins 1987 pp.35-54.
- 14 See Taylor MK: Op.Cit. Introduction.
- 15 See, for example, Jung CG: Psychological Types RKP 1971 pp.442-447; Brown JAC: Freud and the Post Freudians Pelican 1967 pp.42-51; Janov A: Total Man Abacus 1975.

The Jungian philosophy of the importance of the atavistic past is reflected in Ambrose Bierce's Julia:

'I had retired early and fallen almost immediately into a peaceful sleep, from which I awoke with that indefinable sense of peril which is, I think, a common experience in that other, earlier life. Of its unmeaning character, too, I was entirely

persuaded, yet that did not banish it.. these were familiar conditions; they had never before distressed me. Nevertheless, the strange terror grew so insupportable that, conquering my reluctance to move, I sat up and lit the lamp at my bedside. Contrary to my expectation this gave me no relief; the light seemed rather an added danger, for I reflected that it would shine, out under the door, disclosing my presence to whatever evil thing might lurk outside. You that are still in the flesh, subject to horrors of the imagination, think what a monstrous fear that must be which seeks in darkness security from the malevolent existences of the night.' (Bierce A: 'The Moonlit Road' in Can Such Things Be Cape 1926 p.53.)

- 16 See Bradford G (ed.): 'James McNeill Whistler' in American Portraits Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1922.

- 17 As Graves seems to do in Goodbye To All That:

'A week or two before, my study had been raided, and one of my more personal poems seized and pinned up on the public notice-board in 'Writing School' - the living room for members of the lower school.. Raymond, the first Carthusian to whom I had been able to talk humanly, grew indignant and took my arm in his. "They are bloody barbarians!" He told me I must pull myself together and do something positive, because I was a good poet and a good person.' (Graves R: Goodbye To All That Penguin 1971 p.41.)

- As does CEM Joad in his autobiography/apologia:

'I left my public school in 1910, an

intelligent young barbarian.. My knowledge of literature was confined to an acquaintance with some of the reasons which have led people erroneously to suppose that Bacon wrote Shakespeare.. I had also some knowledge of Sheridan's The Rivals and The School for Scandal, through having acted the parts of Bob Acres and Charles Surface in school plays.. Looking back upon my education I am not only astonished at its irrelevance but indignant at its inadequacy.' (Joad CEM: The Book of Joad Faber 1943 pp.7-9.)

The blueprint for this argument is probably Arnold's. (Arnold M: Culture and Anarchy Oxford 1969.) Lipton's more recent Bohemian 'holy barbarians' (Lipton L: The Holy Barbarians Allen 1960) are of a quite different order and belong to a different cultural argument - that of Beat against Square or Straight.

- 18 Kaufmann W: Existentialism From Dostoevsky To Sartre NL 1975 Introduction.
- 19 Perhaps the 'courageous' mentality is captured by Zelazny (Zelazny R: A Rose for Ecclesiastes Hart-Davies 1969 pp.204-205) in his story of an earthman who attempts to dissuade the inhabitants of Mars from voluntary genocide as a response to trials besetting them:

'..ours is not an insignificant people, [nor] an insignificant place.. Thousands of years ago [a prophet] of our world wrote a book saying that it was. He spoke as Locar did, but we did not lie down, despite plagues, wars and famines. We did not die.. we beat the diseases, we fed the hungry, we fought the wars.. We may finally have conquered them. I do not know. But we have crossed millions of miles of nothingness.. We have visited another world. And our Locar had said, "Why bother? What is the worth of it? It is all vanity anyhow." And the secret is.. he was right! It is pride!'

Mailer's peroration for modern man in the West, with its overtones of heroism, may be interpreted similarly:

'So, yes, it may be time to say that the Republic is in real peril, and we are the cowards who must defend courage, sex, consciousness, the beauty of the body, the search for love, and the capture of what may be, after all, an heroic destiny. But to say these words is to show how sad we are, for those of us who believe the most have spent our lives writing of fear, impotence, stupidity, ugliness, self-love and apathy, and yet it has been an act of faith, our attempt to see - to see and to see hard.. that Reality whose existence may depend on the honest life of our work, the honour of ourselves which permits us to say no better than we have seen.'
(Mailer N: Advertisements for Myself
Panther 1972 p.23.)

This is a far cry from Kerouac's nihilistic Beat Generation philosophy (Kerouac J in Feldman G and

Gartenberg M: Protest Quartet 1973 p.75):

"Everybody is going to fall apart, disintegrate, all character-structures based on tradition and uprightness and so-called morality will slowly rot away, people will get the hives right on their hearts, great crabs will cling to their brains.. their lungs will crumble."

"Are you serious?" laughed Peter.

"Perfectly serious," [I replied].

"It's the great molecular meltdown."

20 This seems largely in accord with Hoggart's thinking (Hoggart R: Speaking To Each Other Vol.2 Chatto & Windus 1970 p.11):

'I value literature because of the way - the peculiar way - in which it explores, recreates and seeks for the meanings in human experience; because it explores the diversity, complexity and strangeness of that experience.. because it recreates the texture of that experience; and because it pursues its explorations with a disinterested passion.. I value literature because in it men look at life with all the vulnerability, honesty and penetration they can command.. and dramatize their insights by means of a unique relationship with language and form.'

Henry Miller's argument is much along the same lines:

'What makes a book live? How often that question arises! The answer in my opinion is simple. A book lives

through the passionate recommendation of one reader to another. Nothing can throttle this basic impulse in the human being. Despite the views of cynics and misanthropes, it is my belief that men will always strive to share their deepest experiences.' (Miller H: The Books in My Life Peter Owen 1952 pp.22-23.)

Richard De Bury, in his Philobiblion (De Bury R: 'Philobiblion' extract in Couch A (ed.): The Oxford Book of English Prose Oxford 1925 p.1063), declares the profound and elevated qualities of literature in different terms:

'O celestial gift of divine liberality, descending from the Father of light to raise up the rational soul even to heaven.. In books cherubim expand their wings, that the soul of the student may ascend and look around from pole to pole, from the rising and the setting sun.. In them the most high and incomprehensible God himself is contained and worshipped.'

- 21 See, for example, Bury JB: The Idea of Progress Macmillan 1920.
- 22 See, for example, Ayers AJ (ed.): The Humanist Outlook Pemberton, Barrie & Rockliff 1968.

23 See the various discussions of the gods of classical times in Frazer J: The Golden Bough Methuen 1980 (abridged edition).

24 The 'courageous' citizen might possibly be seen partly in terms of William James'

'..habit, the enormous fly-wheel of society.. It keeps the fisherman and the deckhand at sea through the winter; it hold the miner in his darkness, and nails the countryman to his log cabin and his lonely farm through all the months of snow..'

(James W, quoted in Nordby VJ and Hall CS: A Guide to Psychologists and Their Concepts Freeman & Cowper San Francisco 1974 p.167.)

This however, is not his definition entirely, just as Vonnegut's account of Western man, although giving us a glimpse of an aspect of 'courageous' man, is not:

'Earthlings went on being friendly, when they should have been thinking instead. And even when they built computers to do [their] thinking for them, they designed them not so much for wisdom as for friendliness. So they were doomed. Homicidal beggars could ride.' (Vonnegut K: Breakfast of Champions Panther 1974 pp.35-36.

25 Gunter Grass' The Tin Drum and several of Hesse's

novels provide examples of nihilistic twentieth century literature. These and other instances are discussed by Hamburger in his From Prophecy to Exorcism (Hamburger M: From Prophecy to Exorcism Longman 1965).

26 Miller A: Death of a Salesman Penguin 1985 Act 2. Priestley's An Inspector Calls (Priestley JB: An Inspector Calls Heinemann 1947) is an epitome of this moral demand and is, like Miller's play, very popular in the schools.

27 See note 9 in text to this chapter. Pertinent and apposite here is literature's agonised reading of the 'courageous' law of 'unlimited contribution to the dynamics of the universe', a reading exemplified in the work of Lillian Hellman:

'So at any given moment you're only the sum of your life up to then. There are no big moments you can reach unless you've a pile of smaller moments to stand on. That big hour of decision, the turning point in your life, the someday you've counted on when you suddenly wipe away your past mistakes, do the work you'd never done, think the way you'd never thought, have what you'd never had - it just doesn't come suddenly. You've trained yourself for it while you waited - or you've let it all run past you and frittered yourself away. I've frittered myself away..' ('The Autumn Garden' in Hellman L: Six

Plays by Lillian Hellman Vintage 1979
p.490.)

Worth noting too is Roy Fuller's perspective on the philosophy of enrichment and meaning through simple experience:

'Far more tenuous than.. remembered facts is one's sense of the disappearing perspectives of people known, experiences undergone - richness that doesn't know why it has faded. Sometimes we used to visit my (or rather, my mother's) Aunt Polly, a good tram-ride or car-ride from Hollins Road. Aunt Polly was my grandmother's (I think elder) sister; lived in pretty humble circumstances. Dimly I recall humorous interplay between them.. But here memory is merging into something like dream. Was he from my grandmother's or grandfather's family the marvellous man who sat on the sofa in the front room at Hollins Road and occasionally ejaculated the word, or words "Cat's-piss"? And was I there?' (Fuller R: Souvenirs London Magazine Editions 1980 p.190.)

- 28 Fitzgerald FS: The Great Gatsby Penguin 1980, closing paragraphs.
- 29 Larkin P: The Whitsun Weddings Faber 1975 'The Whitsun Weddings'.

30 Auden WH: 'Musee Des Beaux Arts' in Macbeth G (ed.):
Poetry 1900 - 1965 Longman 1970. This ubiquitous
textbook is a school classic.

31 See note 11 in text to this chapter.

Contrast Tillich, in anticipation of what follows in
the text, with Jung:

'Fate will have it - and thus has
always been the case with me - that
all the 'outer' aspects of my life
should be accidental. Only what is
interior has proved to have substance
and a determining value. As a result,
all memory of outer events has faded,
and perhaps these 'outer' experiences
were never so very essential anyhow,
or were so only in that they
coincided with phases of my inner
development.. Yet these are the very
things that make up a sensible
biography: persons one has met,
travels, adventures, entanglements,
blows of destiny, and so on. But with
few exceptions all these things have
become for me phantasms which I
barely recollect and which my mind
has no desire to reconstruct, for
they no longer stir my imagination.'
(Jung CG: Memories, Dreams,
Reflections Collins & RKP 1963 p.12.)

Jung's claims, of course, may be true but they are
still political. Priestley, in his Man and Time
(Priestley JB: Man and Time Aldus & Allen 1964),
discusses Gurdjieff at some length, stressing his
insistence that the 'false personalities' forced

upon one by the events and demands of everyday living and social interaction must be jettisoned to enable one's 'essence' to come into its own.

32 See, for example, Woolf V: The Years Hogarth Press 1937.

33 Dickens C: Great Expectations Penguin 1980.
Worth recalling here is Bagehot's pronouncement on Dickens:

'...A second most wonderful special faculty which Mr Dickens possesses is what we may call his vivification of character.. He has a very peculiar power of taking hold of some particular traits, and making a character out of them.. He sees people in the street, doing certain things, talking in a certain way, and his fancy petrifies them in the act..' (Bagehot W: 'Charles Dickens' in Literary Studies Vol.2 Everyman pp.176-177.)

34 Bronte E: Wuthering Heights Penguin 1980.

35 Thomas D: 'In my Craft or Sullen Art' in Macbeth G (ed.): Op.Cit.

36 Whitman W: 'Among the Multitude' in The Portable Walt Whitman Penguin 1981.

37 Whitman W: 'That Shadow My Likeness' in Op.Cit.

Worth noting in the present context is Ibsen's Peer Gynt, a disquisition on man's inability to locate his own fixed character (Ibsen H: Peer Gynt Heinemann 1908; see also discussion of Peer Gynt in Williams R: Drama from Ibsen to Brecht Chatto & Windus 1953). The play portrays and is a warning against 'pathological inessentiality', just as Brand (Ibsen H: Brand Heinemann 1908) warns against the opposite extreme.

A more sophisticated account of the essentiality and non-temporality of the self, certainly not met with in the schoolroom but bearing a real if oblique relationship to that which is, can be found in Proust:

'..another inquiry demanded my attention most imperiously, the inquiry.. into the cause of this felicity which I had just experienced.. And this cause I began to divine as I compared these diverse happy impressions, diverse yet with this in common, that I experienced them at the present moment and at the same time in the context of a different moment, so that the past was made to encroach upon the present and I was made to doubt whether I was in one or the other. The truth surely was that the being within me which had enjoyed these impressions, had enjoyed them because they had in them something that was common to a day long past and to now, because in some way they were extra-temporal, and this being made its

appearance only when, through one of these identifications of the present with the past, it was likely to find itself in the one and only medium in which it could exist and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say: outside of time.' (Proust M, quoted in Johnson PH: 'Triumph over Time' in Quennel P (ed.): Marcel Proust 1871-1922 Weidenfold & Nicolson 1971 pp.199-200.)

38 Whitman W: 'Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand' in Op.Cit.

Unfortunately, the idea of literature as the individual's spiritual master is better known in terms of writers rather than readers. Vide Francis Thompson:

'Implacable sweet daemon, Poetry
What I have lost for thee!
Whose lips too sensitively well
Have shaped thy shrivelling oracle.
So much as I have lost, O world,
thou has,
And for thy plenty I am waste;
Ah, count, O world, my cost,
Ah, count, O world, thy gain
For thou has nothing gained but I
have lost!
And, ah, my loss is such,
If thou have gained as much
Thou hast even harvest of Egyptian
years,
And that great overflow which gives
thee grain
The bitter Nilus of my risen tears!'
(Thompson F: 'Laus Amara Doloris' in
The Poems of Francis Thompson Oxford
1951.)

The idea of sacrifice on the part of the initiate also deserves consideration. Abnegation of 'worldly desires' is a necessary condition of initiation, but that abnegation does not separate man from his most human satisfactions, as happens in CS Lewis' The Great Divorce (Lewis CS: The Great Divorce Faber 1960). Therein, sinners about to enter Heaven have to abandon all human satisfactions from the 'lowest' to the 'highest': they must abandon their humanity altogether to become 'divine'. As the sinners are advised, 'there can be no Heaven with a little of Hell in it'. For the acolyte of literature, however, sacrifice and abnegation are not of the divine order. The highest human satisfactions are what he sacrifices for, and his sacrifice is in terms of quality rather than of kind. Hence the comfort behind the idea of sacrifice, and the increased attractiveness of a 'literary religion'.

In other respects the literary 'religion' is similar to any religion in the context of the present age.

Vide Belloc:

'What is it, do you think, that causes the return [to religion]? I think it is the problem of living; for every day, every experience of evil demands a solution. That solution is provided by the memory of the great scheme which at last we remember.. But I will not attempt to explain it for I have not the power;

only I know that we who return suffer hard things; for there grows a gulf between us and many companions. We are perpetually thrust into minorities, and the world almost begins to talk a strange language..' (Belloc H: 'On the Faith' in The Path to Rome Nelson p.142.)

39 There is evidence to suggest the extreme susceptibility of some to literature as religion, albeit chiefly drawn from writers' memoirs and autobiography (or semi-autobiography). There we can find first of all revulsion against the kind of world we have chosen to call 'courageous', illustrated here by George Orwell's Keep the Aspidistra Flying (Orwell G: Keep the Aspidistra Flying Penguin 1978 p.21.):

'He gazed out at the graceless street. At this moment it seemed to him that, in a street like this, in a town like this, every life that is lived must be meaningless and intolerable.. For can you not see, if you know how to look, that.. there is nothing but a frightful emptiness, a secret despair?'

There is, too, the longing after a meaning to life agonisingly absent, evident in Spender (Spender S: World Within World Readers' Union 1953 p.2):

'When I was taught about the past I often regretted that there were no great causes left to fight for; that I could not be crucified, nor go on a crusade, nor choose to defend the

cause of St. Joan against the (then) wicked English, nor free slaves nor kill tyrants.. I craved for a savagery, a daemonism which seemed to have gone out of the world..'

And, again, there is the exhilarating impact of literature as an escape from prosaic living, as seen in Kazan's The Arrangement (Kazan E: The Arrangement Collins 1967 pp.81-82):

'Then I decided to make a collection of every book I wanted to read for the rest of my life.. And my life seemed rich for the first time. Each day I made entries in what you might call a spiritual diary.. I would put down what I had reflected on and experienced that day. It's amazing.. how important everything that happened suddenly became. As I got to thinking, I wondered why I had become what I had become. I began to feel that now, finally, I was doing what I wanted to do with my life.'

The absolute value of literature, next, is reflected in Amiel's journals (Amiel HF: The Journal Intime Macmillan 1894 p.245):

'..a beautiful piece of writing is beautiful by virtue of a kind of truth which is truer than any mere record of authentic facts.. A chronicler may be able to correct Tacitus, but Tacitus survives the chroniclers. If I desired anything it would be to leave a monument behind.. an imperishable work which might stir the thoughts, the feelings, the dreams of men, generation after generation..'

Finally, literature's eleutherian possibilities are touched on by Pater:

'Books there were.. but of a dulness, a distance from the actual interests of the warm, various, coloured life around and within him.. There was more entertainment in the natural train of his own solitary thoughts.. than in all the books he had hunted through so carefully for the all-searching intellectual light, of which a passing gleam of interest gave fallacious promise here or there. And still, generously, he held to the belief, urging him to fresh endeavour, that the literature which might set heart and mind free must exist somewhere, though court librarians could not say where.. Oh! for a literature set free, conterminous with the interest of life itself. (Pater W: 'Duke Carl of Rosenmold' in Imaginary Portraits Macmillan 1907 p.130.)

- and by Carlyle:

'But here, as in his former schools, his studies and inquiries, diligently prosecuted I believe, were of the most discursive wide-flowing character; not steadily advancing along beaten roads towards College honours, but pulsing out.. towards whatever spiritual Delphi might promise to unfold the mystery of this world, and announce to him what was, in our new day, the authentic message of the gods.. his grand tutors the multifarious set of Books he devoured.' (Carlyle T: The Life of John Sterling Chapman & Hall 1897 p.34.)

40 Again, as regards literature as religion, Graham Greene's meditation on the influence of books in childhood is worth recalling:

'Perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives. ..in childhood all books are books of divination.. I suppose that is why books excited us so much. What do we ever get nowadays from reading to equal the excitement and the revelation in those first fourteen years? ..No, it is in those early years that I would look for the crisis, the moment when life took on a new start in its journey towards death..' (Greene G: The Lost Childhood Eyre & Spottiswoode 1951 p.13.)

CS Lewis' Surprised by Joy appears to bear this out:

'I am a product of long corridors, empty sunlit rooms, upstairs indoor silences, attics explored in solitude.. Also of endless books.. Nothing was forbidden me. In the seemingly endless rainy afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves.. What neither [my father] nor my mother had the least taste for was that kind of literature to which my allegiance was given the moment I could choose books for myself. Neither had ever listened for the horns of elfland..' (Lewis CS: Surprised By Joy Fontana 1959 pp.10-14.)

Further, books for the child, like religion for the worshipper, create a contained world insulated from 'reality'. Vide Maugham and Kipling:

'One day a good fortune befell him, for he hit upon Lane's translation of The Thousand Nights and a Night. He was captured first by the illustrations, and then he began to read, to start with, the stories that dealt with magic.. He forgot the life about him.. Insensibly he formed.. the habit of reading.. He did not know.. that he was creating for himself an unreal world which would make the real world of every day a source of bitter disappointment..' (Maugham WS: Of Human Bondage Pan 1981 pp.37-38.)

'There were not many books in that house, but Father and Mother as soon as they heard I could read sent me priceless volumes. When my Father sent me a Robinson Crusoe with steel engravings I set up in business alone as a trader with savages.. in a mildewy basement room where I stood my solitary confinements. My apparatus was a coconut shell strung on a red cord, a tin trunk, and a piece of packing case which kept off any other world. Thus fenced about, everything inside.. was quite real, but mixed with the smell of damp cupboards. If the bit of board fell, I had to begin the magic all over again.' (Kipling R: Something of Myself Macmillan 1937 pp.7-9.)

Perhaps the impact of books described above owes something to the childish apprehension of the world as Wolfe describes it, again an account autobiographical in temper:

'..he built.. in his brain with all the naive but passionate intensity of childhood.. a world that was drawn in very bright and very innocent and very thrilling colours - a world

where the grass was very, very green, the trees sumptuous and full-bodied, the streams like sapphire, and the skies a crystal blue. It was a rich, compact, precisely executed world, in which there were no rough edges and no bleak vacancies, no desolate and empty gaps.' (Wolfe T: The Web and the Rock Heinemann 1947 pp.9-10.)

Useful for contrast here is Gogol's account of the dimming of childish 'idealist' perception:

'It was one of those grey days which lend a strange glitter to the green of the grass and cause the birds to twitter somehow discordantly. After a short while, they looked back. Their house seemed to have sunk into the earth.. Before them there still stretched the meadow with which the story of their lives was so closely intertwined... And now there was nothing to be seen on the horizon except the pole over the well with a cartwheel nailed to it, erect and lonely against the sky. And the terrain, which had seemed flat as they crossed it, loomed up behind as a hill, hiding everything that lay beyond. And so it was the end of childhood, of games, of all such things.'
(Gogol N: 'Taras Bulba' Ch.1 in The Diary of a Madman and Other Stories Signet 1964.)

Unfortunately, the popular idea of the impact of reading when young is as vague and platitudinous and ultimately unmeaning as Isadora Duncan's account, describing one of many 'great readers':

'After I left school I became a great reader. There was a public library in

Oakland, where we then lived, but, no matter how many miles we were from it, I ran or danced or skipped there and back..' (Duncan I: My Life Sphere 1968 p.23.)

A less vague but still unsatisfactory account of the impact of literature is provided by GG Coulton in his autobiography:

'In that year, 1876, Sir GO Trevelyan's Life of Macaulay appeared.. This was the first book to give me a feeling, not indeed that I was a man, but that I might be.. [which none] read with more exalted feelings than I did..' (Coulton GG: Fourscore Years Cambridge 1945 p.84.)

41 I am not suggesting here that the communicant with the 'church' of humane literature is necessarily an artist himself, like Ruskin:

'I don't think myself a great genius.. but I believe I have genius; something different from mere cleverness, for I am not clever in the sense that millions of people are - lawyers, physicians and others. But there is a strong instinct in me which I cannot analyse, to draw and describe the things I love.. not for reputation, not for the good of others, not for my own advantage, but a sort of instinct like that for eating and drinking..' (John Ruskin: letter to his father, 2nd June 1852, in Clark K: The Gothic Revival Pelican 1964 p.182.)

The impulse of most communicants is perhaps best described by Wordsworth in The Prelude (Wordsworth W: The Prelude (1850) Penguin 1982 Book 5 ls 505-507):

'Dumb yearnings,
hidden appetites are ours,
And they must have their food.'

However the student's relationship with literature is not entirely one-sided. We may not say, as Duff said of Rutherford, that intuition has no part to play in the 'revelation' of humane literature:

'Now it cannot be too emphatically declared that by no means would mysticism, in any sense of internal self-sufficing light, be more summarily repudiated than by Samuel Rutherford. The very idea of substituting any intuition.. for the genuine, authentic and divinely-accredited revelation of Jehovah's holy oracles he would.. reject with indignation and abhorrence.' Duff A (ed.): Letters of Samuel Rutherford Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier 1891 Preface.)

We must emphasize, again, the certain 'fragility', and even a slight hint of ambivalence perhaps, in the relationship of acolyte to literature. This line of thought leads us to Lewis Mumford's account of the acolytes of prophets literary, religious and otherwise:

'Even among those who come directly under the prophet's influence, the faithful handful, the process of rebirth and renewal takes place slowly, haltingly: the disciples are at first witnesses rather than active participants: if they are fascinated by this new species of man, they are also full of doubts and resistances and impulses to betrayal..' (Mumford L: The Conduct of Life Secker & Warburg 1952 p.102.)

- 42 It might, certainly, be advanced that it is the acolyte of literature who is bent on exorcising a world not to his taste. This is a popular argument which has a long pedigree:

'The description of persons who have the fewest ideas of all others are mere authors and readers. It is better to be able neither to read nor write than to be able to do nothing else.. Nature puts [the writer or reader] out.. the impressions of real objects, stripped of the disguises of words and voluminous roundabout descriptions, are blows that stagger him.. he turns from the bustle, the noise.. [the] whirling motion of the world about him.' (Hazlitt W: On the Ignorance of the Learned Edinburgh Magazine July 1818.)

- 43 Collodi C: The Adventures of Pinocchio Collins 1960
Ch.1.
- 44 Salinger JD: The Catcher in the Rye Penguin 1982
p.64.

- 45 Kierkegaard S: 'On Authority and Revelation' in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit.
- 46 Collodi C: Op.Cit. Ch.3.
- 47 Benedict R: Patterns of Culture RKP 1971 pp.37-38.
- 48 Cheever J: The Wapshot Scandal Penguin 1968 p.80.
- 49 Collodi C: Op.Cit. Ch.4.
- 50 Kafka F: 'Metamorphosis' in Secker & Warburg Collected Edition 1976, opening paragraphs p.459.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- 1 For an account of custom's influence, see discussion of Bacon's 'idols' in, for example, Urmson JO (ed.): The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers Hutchinson 1975.
- 2 See any text on the structure and function of the Western University (for example, Livingstone H: The University: An Organisational Analysis Blackie 1974, or Brook GL: The Modern University Deutsch 1965).
- 3 The considerable influence of the idea of 'evolution' on argument concerning human experience is discussed very clearly in Dobzhansky T: The Biology of Ultimate Concern Fontana 1971 Ch.3.
- 4 Dostoevsky F: 'Notes from Underground' in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. pp.53-54.
Whitman's observation, in Democratic Vistas, serves as a telling comment on Dostoevsky's pronouncements here and in the remainder of this chapter:

'The quality of Being, in the object's self, according to its own central idea and purpose.. is the lesson of Nature.. in our times, refinement and delicatessen are not only attended to sufficiently, but threaten to eat us up like a cancer. Already, the democratic genius watches, ill-pleased, these tendencies. Provision for a little

healthy rudeness, savage virtue.. is demanded.. Singleness and normal simplicity.. and separation, amid this more and more complex.. state.. how pensively we yearn for them! How we would welcome their return!' (Whitman W: Democratic Vistas Camelot 1887 pp.41-42.)

- 5 Shakespeare W: Hamlet Various editions.
- 6 Orwell G: 1984 Penguin 1984.
- 7 Conrad J: Heart of Darkness Penguin 1985.
- 8 Larkin P: 'Reasons for Attendance' in Macbeth G (ed.): Op.Cit.

Contrast the lack of such complication in Sagan's brilliantly lucid and controlled A Certain Smile:

'We had spent the afternoon in a cafe in the Rue Saint-Jacques, a spring afternoon like any other. I was slightly bored, and walked up and down between the juke-box and the window, while Bertrand talked about Spire's lecture. I was leaning on the machine, watching the record rising slowly, almost gently, like a proffered cheek, to its slanting position against the sapphire, when, for no apparent reason, I was overcome by a feeling of intense happiness, a sudden realisation that some day I would die, that my hand would no longer touch that chromium rim, nor would the sun shine in my eyes.

I turned towards Bertrand; when he saw me smile he got up. He could not bear me to be happy without him. My joys were to be limited to the short and most important hours of our life together. In a vague way I already knew this, but that day I could not tolerate it, and turned back to the machine. The piano was playing the theme of 'Lone and Sweet' and the clarinet took it up. Every note of the tune was familiar.' (Sagan F: A Certain Smile Penguin 1961, opening paragraphs.)

9 Dostoevsky F: Op.Cit. in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. p.79.

10 Frost R: 'After Apple-Picking' in Op.Cit.

Of course, pace Dostoevsky's complaint, many writers display a profoundly reverential attitude towards the mystical imagination. Leigh Hunt provides a typical example:

'Take care of this ground, and let as many glad imaginations through to it as possible. Read the magical works of the poets, and they will come.. It is not mere words to say that he who goes through a rich man's park, and sees things in it which never bless the mental eyesight of the possessor, is richer than he. He is richer. More results of pleasure come home to him. The ground is actually more fertile to him: the place haunted with finer shapes..' (Hunt L: 'On the Realities of the Imagination' in Essays Camelot 1887 p.70.)

- 11 Dostoevsky F: Op.Cit. in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit.
pp.77-78.
- 12 Fitzgerald FS: Op.Cit.
- 13 Burgess A: A Clockwork Orange Penguin 1981.
- 14 See, for example, Austen J: Emma Penguin 1980.
- 15 Pavese C: This Business of Living: Diaries 1935-1950 Quartet 1983 p.48.
- 16 Dostoevsky F: Op.Cit. in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit.
p.78.
- 17 Schaffer P: Equus Longman 1983.
- 18 Beckett S: Krapp's Last Tape Faber 1969 pp.12-13.
Contrast Beckett's Krapp with Kingsley's Minute
Philosopher and his platitudinous acceptance of life
and self:

'Food, raiment, and work to earn them
withal; love and marriage, birth and
death, right doing and wrong doing..
and all those commonplaces of
humanity.. [are].. in the eyes of a
minute philosopher most divine,
because they are most commonplace..
In any life, in any state, however

simple or humble, there will always be sufficient to occupy a Minute Philosopher; and if a man be busy, and busy about his duty, what more does he require, for time or for eternity?' (Kingsley C: 'My Winter Garden' in Prose Idylls Macmillan 1889 pp.160-161.)

- 19 Nietzsche F: 'The Dawn' in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. p.126.

- 20 Dostoevsky F: Op.Cit. in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. pp.54-55.

It is appropriate at this juncture to recall Mazzini's (admittedly Romantic) dictum, and apply it to the situation of the student of literature in the University.

'Analysis can never regenerate the peoples. Analysis is potent to dissolve; impotent to create.. Association is synthesis; and synthesis is divine: it is the lever of the world; the only method of regeneration vouchsafed to the human family..' (Mazzini J: 'Faith and the Future' in Essays Camelot 1887 p.9.)

- 21 Andersen HC: 'The Snow Queen' in Haugaard EC (ed.): A Treasury of Hans Christian Andersen Doubleday 1974.

- 22 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.
The snow - the influence of the finally 'courageous'
University discussed earlier in the chapter - is, in
a manner of speaking, Joyce's, signalling the
inchoate:

'A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, further westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried.. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.' (Joyce J: 'The Dead' in Dubliners Penguin 1968.)

- 23 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.

- 24 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.

- 25 It is, on reflection, as if the University in its attitude towards acolytes of literature partly prescribes a therapy rather like that prescribed by the Doctor for Jacob Horner, hapless 'neurasthenic', in Barth's The End of the Road (Barth J: The End of

the Road Penguin 1967 pp.5-9):

'It was on the advice of the Doctor that I entered the teaching profession; for a time I was a teacher of grammar at Wicomico State Teachers' College, in Maryland.

The Doctor had brought me to a certain point in my original schedule of therapies (this was in June 1953), and then, once when I drove down from Baltimore for my quarterly check up at the Remobilization Farm, which at that time was near Wicomico, he said to me, "Jacob Horner, you mustn't sit idle any longer. You will have to begin work."

"I'm not idle all the time," said I. "I take different jobs."

..After a while the Doctor said, "What reason do you think you have for not applying for a job at the little teachers' college here in Wicomico?"

.."No reason, sir," I said.

"Then it's settled. Apply at once for the fall term. And what will you teach? Iconography? Automotive mechanics?"

"English literature, I guess."

"..There must be a rigid discipline, or else it will be merely an occupation, not an occupational therapy. There must be a body of laws.

..No description at all. No optional situations. Teach the rules."

In a sadder light, one might see the University's treatment of the student of literature as a symptom of Fromm's broad account of 'necrophilia', the desire to control others and reduce them to predictability. (See Fromm E: The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil Harper & Row 1964.) RD Laing's words, in a different context, seem to me peculiarly appropriate here as peroration for a religion denied a soteriology:

'Those who have studied painful interactions have documented many ways in which we may do one another in, not always knowing we are doing so, or being so done to. Many nuances of ways we may confuse, deceive and mystify ourselves and others, without realising we are, have been described by the experts in this division of hell in recent years.' (Laing RD: Conversations with Children Penguin 1978 p.7.)

Again, Lawlor, writing on the Catholic undergraduate, provides an account of the student-University relationship which is neatly apposite to our tale of devils and mirrors and innocent student-acolytes:

'A different problem is raised by the student whose chief characteristic is an unworldly innocence.. sometimes so extreme as to be positively frightening. This innocent child believes what you tell him because you are wise, benevolent and there to be relied on - not quite, perhaps,

because - horrid doubt - you may be numbered among the wicked, of whom he has heard rumours. These rumours unfortunately were too vague.. and he rightly doubts his ability to distinguish them readily unless they have red tights, a tail and horns.' (Lawlor M: 'The Catholic Undergraduate' in Coulson J (ed.): Theology and the University Darton, Longman & Todd 1964 p.31.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1 The ability and, indeed, the determination of schools to exist in a world all their own needs little attestation, but Wain's renegade University graduate, who applies for a job as window-cleaner at his old school, and his reception, capture the spirit of the thing (Wain J: Hurry on Down Penguin 1960 pp.32-37):

'At last he was ushered into the headmaster's study: that room which, with its careful arrangement of the 'traditional' props of leather armchairs, classical busts, glass-fronted book-cases, had been the scene of the utmost disasters and triumphs of his boyhood..

"Well now, Lumley; and what can I," here he paused for an instant, and spoke the next three words with unnecessary distinctness, as if to parody them, "do for you?"

"You could look straight at me, to start with," Charles almost replied, for Scrodd was up to his usual game of peering ironically in his direction, vaguely taking in with his short-sighted glance the general area within which his interlocutor might be found, like one who has seen a tiny insect on the wallpaper, lost it again, and is half-interestedly looking for it. But annoyed as he felt at this habitual, perfunctory insolence, he refrained from any sign of impatience, for, in the three years during which he and Scrodd had not met, he had become familiar with the peculiar psychological burden under which the schoolmaster was sinking.

.."I thought you might be so kind as to help me professionally, sir," Charles said briskly.

Scrodd gave a slight twitch that brought his wandering gaze to within three inches of Charles' shoulder. A sneer appeared on his face.

"I could have saved you trouble, Lumley, if you had mentioned in your letter what it was you wanted to see me about; I could have told you that this school is fully staffed, and that I have no influence elsewhere."

Charles leaned forward in incredulous pity. The scare-crow actually thought that he, a free human being, wished to enrol in his shambling regiment of pedagogues.

"My intention is not to enter the teaching profession, Mr Scrodd. My vocational requirements are," he hesitated, "simpler and easier to fulfil..."

"And in what way," demanded Scrodd insolently, looking ironically past him, "are they easy for me to fulfil?"

Charles leaned back in his chair, and fixed his eyes on the thick lenses opposite.

"This school has windows. Someone must have to clean them from time to time; either someone from outside, or one of the school servants who could be better employed about his ordinary duties. Now this, as you yourself once remarked to me, is the age of the specialist."

..Scrodd was on his feet, and the miracle had happened. He was looking directly at Charles.

"I am still hoping," he articulated distinctly, "that this will turn out to be some foolish joke on your part."

.."Look at it this way. Suppose you don't get anyone in from outside, who is there who can do it decently? No

one. Smith's too fat and rheumatic to get to the top of a ladder, and as for Bert, you must know that he can't be spared from the coke-shovelling -"

"Lumley! Spare me the trouble of ringing for the janitor and having you taken out of here by force!"

" - except during the summer, and then he has to act as groundsman. I could take the whole thing off their hands, and make the windows a credit to the school."

Scrodd's hand jerked to the bell, and pressed the button, holding it feverishly down.'

- 2 France A: 'Putois' in Crainquebille and Other Profitable Tales John Lane 1923 p.61 and 59.
- 3 Kierkegaard S: The Concluding Unscientific Postscript in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. pp.86-87.
- 4 Kierkegaard S: Op.Cit. in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. pp.86-87.
- 5 See, for example, Holt J: The Underachieving School Penguin 1970; Postman N and Weingartner D: Teaching as a Subversive Activity Penguin 1975; Berg L: Risinghill: Death of a Comprehensive School Pelican 1968; Blisshen E (ed.): The School that I'd Like Penguin 1967; Downie RS, Loudfoot EM and Telfer E: Education and Personal Relationships Methuen 1974; Freire P: Pedagogy of the Oppressed Seabury 1970.

- 6 For example, Kohl H: 36 Children Gollancz 1968.
- 7 Neill AS: Summerhill Pelican 1982.
- 8 Kierkegaard S: 'Fear and Trembling' in Fear and Trembling and This Sickness unto Death Princeton University 1970 pp.50-51.
- 9 Sartre JP: 'Being and Nothingness' in Kaufmann W (ed.): Op.Cit. pp.313-316.
- 10 Moore G: Confessions of a Young Man Heinemann 1926 pp.107-108.
- It is, of course, possible to observe that literary characters exist who do make that attempt to live without thinking, however unorthodox the strategy. Jean Genet's apocalyptic thief (Genet J: The Thief's Journal Penguin 1967) elevates three 'vices' into conclusive virtues - 'treason, homosexuality and theft' - and lives untroubled by further qualms thereafter.
- 11 Sartre JP: The Age of Reason Penguin 1961 p.118. The Age of Reason offers also the following account of schoolteacher Mathieu, relevant to our account of the teacher of English in a 'void':

"Bless the little creature, I didn't tell you I couldn't stand him. It was simply that I couldn't understand what you found in him.."

"I find him sympathetic," said [Boris] sedately.

"That's what you always say. It isn't precisely the word that I should choose. Tell me he's intelligent, well-read, and I'll agree: but not sympathetic.. Mathieu makes everyone uncomfortable because he isn't fish nor flesh, you don't know how to take him. Look at his hands, for instance."

"What's the matter with his hands? I like them."

"They're workman's hands. They're always quivering a little, as though he'd just finished some heavy job of work."

"Well, why not?"

"Yes, but the point is he's not a workman. When I see his great paw gripping a glass of whisky, he looks like a man who means to enjoy life.. but take care to watch him drinking, with that odd mouth of his - why, it's a parson's mouth. I can't explain it, I get the feeling he's austere, and then if you look at his eyes, you can see he knows too much, he's the sort of fellow who can't enjoy anything in a simple way, neither eating, nor drinking, nor sleeping with women: he has to think about everything. It's like that voice of his, the cutting voice of a gentleman who is never wrong." (Sartre JP Op.Cit. p.28.)

- 12 Williams R: Culture and Society 1780-1950 Doubleday
& Anchor 1960 p.332.

Only partly governed by the 'courageous' idea of literature, the teacher's relationship with literature in his new circumstances is as absurd, for example, as Alice's grasp of History:

'For, with all her knowledge of history, Alice had no very clear notion of how long ago anything had happened.'
(Carroll L: 'Alice In Wonderland' Ch.2 in Alice In Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass Blackie.)

A glimpse, perhaps recondite in the two chief senses of the word, of the teacher's position as regards the over-mastering 'courageous' world is afforded by Thucydides:

'..When a state revolts in the middle of a war and deserts its previous allies, those who welcome it into their alliance are just so far pleased with it as they find it useful to them, but otherwise think the worse of it for having betrayed its former friends.'
(Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War Book 3 Penguin 1978 p.197.)

- 13 Augustine: Confessions Griffith, Farran, Browne & Co. 1886 p.57.

The attitude of the apostate from literature to the values and vision of the 'ordinary' world is not simply that of Hesse's intellectual prodigy (Hesse H: The Glass Bead Game Penguin 1978), who exists in a different, sheltered world entirely. The student-

apostate has surrendered to the 'courageous' world, yet feels ambivalent towards it.

14 Andersen HC: 'The Professor and the Flea' in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.

15 There is a parallel here between the desperate, 'busy' alienation or irresponsibility of the teacher and Bunyan's Mr Badman (Bunyan J: The Life and Death of Mr Badman, discussed in Froude JA: Bunyan Macmillan 1902 Ch.7). Mr Badman, who deserves to be better known so far as our understanding of sin is concerned, is continually active and enterprising in the world but nurses at heart a secret despair, and is ultimately doomed in the eyes of God. The Pilgrim's Progress (Bunyan J: The Pilgrim's Progress Everyman) seems, by comparison, morally uninteresting.

16 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit. For the reader to detect echoes of Ichabod Crane (Irving W: 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' in The Sketch Book Everyman) is not inappropriate. The parallel, however, while of use in envisaging the teacher as Alien Personality or Hostile Consciousness' comic and active aspect, is limited.

- 17 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.
- 18 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.
- 19 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.
- 20 Andersen HC: Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.

It must be emphasized that we are not dealing simply with a disaffected literary acolyte - an example of which is included below for contrast - but with an apostate from literature, books no longer influencing him as they clearly do McCarthy's Mulcahy (McCarthy H: The Groves of Academe Panther 1966 pp.7-9):

When Henry Mulcahy, a middle-aged instructor of literature at Jocelyn College, Jocelyn, Pennsylvania, unfolded the President's letter and became aware of its contents, he gave a sudden sharp cry of impatience and irritation, as if such interruptions could positively be brooked no longer. This was the last straw. How was he expected to take care of forty students if other demands on his attention were continually being put in the way? On the surface of his mind, this vagrant grievance kept playing. Meanwhile, he had grown pale and his hands were trembling with anger and a strange sort of exultation. 'Your appointment will not be continued beyond the current academic year..' He sprang to his feet and mimed the sentence aloud, triumphantly, in inverted commas, bringing the whole force of his

personality to bear on this specimen or exhibit of the incredible..

Mulcahy's freckled fist came down on the desk. A tall, soft-bellied, lisping man with a tense, mushroom-white face, rimless bifocals, and greying thin red hair, he was intermittently aware of a quality of personal unattractiveness that emanated from him like a miasma; this made him self-pitying, uxorious, and addicted also to self-love, for he associated it with his destiny as a portent of some personal epiphany. As a prophet of modern literature in a series of halfway-good colleges, he had gladly accepted an identification with the sacred untouchables of the modern martyrology - with Joyce, the obscure language teacher in Trieste; with tubercular Kafka in Prague, browbeaten by an authoritarian father; with the sickly, tisane-drenched Proust; with Marx, even, and his carbuncles; with Socrates and the hemlock. He carried an ash-plant stick in imitation of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus; subscribed to Science and Society, the Communist scholarly publication; and proclaimed the Irish, his ancestors, to be the ten lost tribes of Israel.'

21 Andersen HC Op.Cit. in Haugaard EC (ed.): Op.Cit.

Here, telling in its stark contrast to the situation we have drawn this far, is a picture of the teacher of English as he might be if left 'unconverted' by the 'courageous' world (Roth P: The Professor of Desire Cape 1978 pp.184-185):

'Permit me to reply with an appeal to the heart. I love teaching literature. I am rarely so contented as when I am here with my pages of notes, and my marked-up texts, with people like yourselves. To my mind

there is nothing quite like the classroom in all of life. Sometimes, when we are in the midst of talking.. I want to cry out, "Dear friends, cherish this!" Why? Because once you have left here, people are rarely, if ever, going to talk to or listen to you the way you talk and listen to one another and me in this bright and barren.. room. Nor is it likely that you will easily find opportunity to speak without embarrassment about what has mattered most to men as attuned to life's struggles as were Tolstoy, Mann and Flaubert. I doubt that you know how very affecting it is to hear you speak thoughtfully and in all earnestness about solitude, illness, longing, loss, suffering, delusion, hope, passion, love, terror, corruption, calamity and death..'

Contrast, again, the account provided of the teacher-apostate with Longfellow's 'poet' (Longfellow HW: 'Kavanagh', quoted in Megroz RL: Pedagogues are Human Rockliff 1950 pp.16-17):

'Nature had made Mr Churchill a poet, but destiny made him a schoolmaster. This produced a discord between his outward and his inward existence. Life presented itself to him like the Sphinx with its perpetual riddle of the real and the ideal. To the solution of this dark problem he devoted his days and his nights. He was forced to teach grammar when he would fain have written poems..'

There are, the reader will allow, apparently few Mr Churchills teaching English in the secondary school.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1 This 'sympathetic' teacher-pupil relationship is propounded in many accounts of secondary teaching.. propounded to the extent that it takes on a distinct air of the Romance, with all attendant unrealities. Bowie's account, highlighting the problems of the 'sympathetic' relationship, would not look out of place adapted in cartoon form in the Sunday Post (Bowie J: Penny Change Constable 1977 pp.142-145):

'I am thrown to the lions - or rather the lionesses - of the Wallace. Forty lionesses, all roaring. They come bounding in from the corridor in wild disorder, and the room, designed for only thirty, becomes saturated. Every desk is not only occupied, but disputed, by trials of strength for territorial rights..

..All this is simply the primitive reaction to an unknown situation, a fear of something new - in this case a new teacher.

"Are ye oor teacher noo, miss?" This overture is from a stubby tow-headed girl who all along has subjugated the others by the volume of her lung-power and the strength of her vocal chords.

"I hope so," I say. (Untruthfully?)

"Whit are we gettin' ye for?"

"To teach you, of course."

"Whit Ah mean is, whit are ye goin' tae teach us?"

"Anything you need to learn."

"Ah'm quite good at French." There is a roar of laughter at this..

"None of that!" I say sharply. "Now - maybe you'd better tell me what you've been doing in English."

"Never had nane for weeks, miss."

"No English? Surely - "

"Ye see," supplies tow-head, "we've had a whole lot o' teachers. The last yin didna last six weeks."

"It'll be different from now on," I say. "You'll have me all the time." (If I last!)

"No kiddin' miss?"

"No kiddin," I say. "Now, I'd like to have your names."

After repeated interruptions, all irrelevant.. I weave myself among the close-packed desks to reach them, for by now I have abandoned all efforts at lessons until I get to know them, and until they have decided that I am not just another enemy.'

That Bowie is a clever mythologist is apparent when we compare her account with Hayes' less resonant reading (Hayes R: The Forbidden Teachers Macmillan 1978 pp.24-27):

'The door of my teaching room was open and they were already there, sitting, standing, screaming and shouting.

"Well, well," said I.

"You our teacher?" said one of the boys at the blackboard in a surprised tone of voice.

"Yes."

"Gawd! they must be desperate!"

"Yes," I said. "I suppose they must be. Now would you please sit down at a desk and be quiet."

They solemnly went to their chairs and desks, but it wasn't long before protests about the glue began to be heard. "Blame the previous class," I said. "They were throwing the glue everywhere."

"'Ow do you frow glue?" asked a girl.

"I don't know," I said. "Now sit down and be quiet, please. This is a lesson and you're going to learn something."..

"Now remain quiet whilst I call out your names," said I. I started to run off the names, but stopped by the fourth one as it became apparent that nobody was answering to the correct name. "Now look," I said. "Stop messing me about, will you? I've had a hard day and I'm sure you've had one too." I continued through the register. At one point, I had to stop once again. I was a third of the way through the list of boys, and Neil Dwright was calling the names out a name behind me, and they were answering to him, and not to me..

"Stand up," I said to Neil Dwright. "Did you hear me?"

"Yes."

"Then do as you're told and be quick about it!" I snapped into his ear.

"My mother -" began Neil Dwright, as he stood up.

"I don't care what you tell your mother," I said. I took his arm and led him from the back of the class. He did not like being led.

"Get off!" he snapped, pulling away.

"Oh, no you don't," I said. I was half-expecting him to turn on me, but it was still a surprise when he did. I grabbed the fist as it hurtled towards me and a brief struggle ensued as I got him to the door, opened it and gave him a shaking to show I meant business. "Now get out of this class immediately!" I ordered, slightly breathless and certainly a touch irate.'

Blishen, too, arguably succumbs to the romance (or anti-romance) of the sympathetic account of the teacher-pupil relationship. With obvious relish he celebrates the 'awfulness' of his environment and pupils (Blishen E: This Right Soft Lot Panther 1971 pp.113, 11 and 17 respectively):

'It was spring. Even in the Stonehill Street district you could sense it; the morning light lay gently on that seedy brickwork, bringing out unexpected colours in the old burnt clay. A front door stood open here and there inviting air into shabby hallways. Children skipped on the pavement. One skipped unwisely, and a woman said: "Wait till I get you inside. I'll brain yer, yer bleeder." There was a quick scattering sound of feet. A child halfway up a lamp post said happily: "Yer mum's going to skin yer, Gladys!"

'..The school building wouldn't tremble, of course. How pleasant if it had done so, just once! I'd

certainly renew my sense of the awfulness of the school building, that first day ..it had become such a surly place, with its heavy brick, its stone-framed entrances, its concrete steps that made you feel you were going up and down to cells and dungeons..'

'..Perksie! Few people thought of him under any other title. I could never make out on what principle Perksie was constructed. Nature had determined that he should be very big, very strong. So far it was easy. But his amiable lazy brutality - what was all that about? Hands resting in a shallow way in his jeans' pockets, so that his elbows were always on duty, knocking the world this way and that as he passed.. He had three brothers and a father, all much the same: it was said in Stonehill Street that if they ever went out together, side by side, elbows on duty, they could clear a whole street of people and traffic..'

Hargreaves succumbs to the same romance as Blishen and Bowie, citing Waugh's Decline and Fall in all seriousness as an example of how the sympathetic teacher-pupil relationship can go awry (Hargreaves DH: Interpersonal Relations and Education RKP 1982 pp.202-203):

'The masters went upstairs.

"That's your little mob in there," said Grimes; "you let them out at eleven."

"But what am I to teach them?" said Paul in a sudden panic.

"Oh, I shouldn't try to teach them anything, not just yet, anyway. Just keep them quiet."

"Now that's a thing I've never learned to do," sighed Mr Prendergast.

Paul watched him amble into his classroom at the end of the passage, where a burst of applause greeted his arrival. Dumb with terror he went into his own classroom..

The ten boys stopped talking and sat perfectly still staring at him. He felt himself getting hot and red under their scrutiny.

"I suppose the first thing I ought to do is to get your names clear. What is your name?" he asked, turning to the first boy.

"Tangent, sir."

"And yours?"

"Tangent, sir," said the next boy. Paul's heart sank..

In a few seconds the room had become divided into two parties; those who were Tangent and those who were not. Blows were already being exchanged, when the door opened and Grimes came in. There was a slight hush.

"I thought you might want this," he said, handing Paul a walking stick. "And if you take my advice,

you'll set them something to do."

He went out; and Paul, firmly grasping the walking-stick, faced his form.'

In the light of the above, Bell and Grant's observation on educational myth is apposite and provocative (Bell R and Grant N: A Mythology of British Education Panther 1974 p.19):

'Clearly, myth does not flourish without reason.. Educational myth's continued currency must be due to some emotional need to believe it, and of course we do not have to look very far to find needs in plenty.. Myth.. flourishes.. in those areas of life where many are vitally affected but few are well informed.'

2 Collodi C: Op.Cit. Ch.36.

The acolytes of literary 'anti-courage' never seem to make a full-blooded return to the 'courageous' world. Saul Bellow's Henderson (Bellow S: Henderson the Rain King Penguin 1974) leaves his 'courageous' world for exotic climes and experiences, never in essence to return; Nabokov's Humbert Humbert gets his wants in the 'courageous' life yet hangs on its fringes, still an outcast (Nabokov V: Lolita Penguin 1979).

- 3 Andersen HC: 'The Snow Queen' in Haugaard EC (ed.):
Op.Cit.

In the world of literature, far away from the world of 'courage', it is not unreasonable to observe that the season is forever autumn, dissolution expected patiently and philosophically. This is the mood of Browne's meditation on the world (Browne T: Religio Medici Camelot 1886), and of a work so far away from his as Sartre's (Sartre JP: Iron in the Soul Penguin 1969). This feeling of being one step away from dissolution is common also to Vera Brittain's account of the world between world wars (Brittain V: Testament of Youth Fontana 1979, foreword):

'For nearly a decade I have wanted, with a growing sense of urgency, to write something which would show what the whole War and post-War period.. has meant to the men and women of my generation, the generation of those boys and girls who grew up just before the War broke out.. Only, I felt, by some such attempt to write history in terms of personal life could I rescue something that might be of value.. from the smashing up of my own youth by the War.'

- 4 Conrad J: The Nigger of the Narcissus Heinemann 1964
pp.22-23.

My rejection of several other possible 'strangely domineering' figures such as Maugham's Magician (Maugham WS: The Magician Pan 1981) should become

clear as the analogy progresses, insofar as the teacher of English in my account dominates not through actual commanding power, like that of Maugham's fictionalised Crowley, so much as commanding weakness.

5 Conrad J: Op.Cit. p.31.

While Pip's encounter with Mr Jaggers on the stairway (Dickens C: Great Expectations Penguin 1980) contains a similar element of shock, it has not quite the sense of alien encounter provided in Conrad's instance.

6 Conrad J: Op.Cit. pp.51-68.

The perverse hold over the pupil by the teacher suggested here is similar to that of the pious but uneasy lover over the 'adulteress' in Hawthorne's exploration of sin (Hawthorne N: The Scarlet Letter Everyman). Neither his nor Wait's power is healthy or commendable, but is gripping nonetheless.

7 Compare Blishen's account of his place in the Vale 'prep' school, in which he sees himself as subsumed in and consumed by the greater 'reality' of his pupils, rather than the other way around. Again I find this unrealistic and sentimental, not in accord

with the 'facts' of schooling:

'In the staff photo, posed in the sunny yard, my face looked very much like those in other photos that hung along the corridors.. The smile that I wore seemed to be stamped into my face: a mark, I thought, of all the desperate good humour of that year..' (Blishen E: Uncommon Entrance Thames & Hudson 1974 p.154.)

This attempt to belong to and be won honourably and voluntarily, rather than inexorably and reluctantly, by the school situation is the theme of Hugh Walpole's school tale Mr Perrin and Mr Traill, in which two dissimilar types of teacher struggle against one another for legitimacy and ascendancy. (Walpole H: Mr Perrin and Mr Traill Everyman.) This failure to achieve a kind of 'symbiotic' relationship with the school explains the sympathy many readers feel for the villainous headmaster in Roy Fuller's autobiographical novel of school life (Fuller R: The Ruined Boys Deutsch 1959). 'School' literature is very often candidly incurious of teachers, encouraging the assumptions described above. Alec Waugh's expose of public school life and related things (Waugh A: The Loom of Youth Severn House 1972) pictures teachers as vigorous and immutable figures. The shadowy mentors whose outlook and opinions form the commentary on their

erstwhile pupils' years of University life in Auberon Waugh's satire (Waugh A: Path of Dalliance Penguin 1968) are grand constants too. Blishen, in another bout of sentimentalism, casts in bronze the image of the larger-than-life 'school-built' teacher:

'John Logan was somewhere near the heart of this enterprise. He was Irish, a dandy, a snob: in a stodgy venture, this attempt to use Rugger and Cricket as aid to social upwardness, he was the one who danced, was prankish. In the school corridors, among trudging teachers, he was always in step with some subliminal minuet. His snobbery was enormous, transparent, and a point of origin for lively lessons that took the place of mathematics whenever his pose as a suitable teacher of this subject became too exhausting for him.. ..A bell would end the lesson. "An usher's life, Morton!" We'd file past him to the door. For such an occasion as this he'd take the games master's whistle from round his neck and, with the strap, whip us with amiable hurtfulness as we skipped past. "An usher's life, eh, Blishen?"' (Blishen E: The Outside Contributor Hamilton 1986 pp.30-31.)

Conversely, Edward Upward's private tutor (Upward E: 'Journey to the Border' in The Railway Accident Penguin 1978) is worth noting as a rare example of the teacher's terror of being thus subsumed and consumed. It is as disturbing and uncanny an account of the teacher's relationship with the world as

Machen's The Hill of Dreams (Machen A: The Hill of Dreams Everyman) is of the artist's relationship with his creative imagination.

8 Conrad J: Op.Cit. p.210.

9 Conrad J: Op.Cit. p.206.

On reflection, perhaps the Victorian account of the teacher-pupil relationship in Kenneth Grahame's The Golden Age (Grahame K: The Golden Age and Dream Days Bodley Head 1962 pp.107-112) goes some way towards exemplifying our revised account:

'The eventful day had arrived at last, the day which, when first named, had seemed - like all golden dates that promise anything definite - so immeasurably remote. When it was first announced, a fortnight before, that Miss Smedley was really going, the resultant ecstasies had occupied a full week, during which we blindly revelled in the contemplation and discussion of her past tyrannies, crimes, malignities; in recalling to each other this or that insult, dishonour, or physical assault, sullenly endured at a time when deliverance was not even a small star on the horizon: and in mapping out the shining days to come, with special new troubles of their own, no doubt - since this is but a work-a-day world! - but at least free from one familiar scourge. The time that remained had been taken up by the planning of practical expressions of the popular sentiment. Under Edward's masterly direction, arrangements had been made for a flag to be run up

over the hen-house at the very moment when the fly, with Miss Smedley's boxes on top and the grim oppressor herself inside, began to move off down the drive..

..The fly and its contents had finally disappeared through the gate, the rumble of its wheels had died away. Yet no flag floated defiantly in the sun, no cannons proclaimed the passing of a dynasty. From out the frosted cake of our existence Fate had cut an irreplaceable segment: turn which way we would, the void was present.'

Might, one ruminates in late deliberation, the 'scandalised' experience of Wait's sailor-servants, appalled with themselves when awoken by Wait's eventual death, find a parallel in many pupils' contemptuous attitude towards their education, once free of school? Are they scandalised with one another because of the nature of the superstitious influence held over them by the alienated and undeniable teacher? Vide Conrad:

'Jimmy's death, after all, came as a tremendous surprise. We did not know till then how much faith we had put in his delusions. We had taken his chances of life so much at his own valuation that his death, like the death of an old belief, shook the foundations of our society. A common bond was gone; the strong, effective and respectable bond of a sentimental lie.. In going he took away with himself the gloomy and solemn shadow in which our folly had posed, with human satisfaction, as a tender arbiter of fate. And now we saw it

was no such thing. It was just common foolishness.. Doubt survived Jimmy; and, like a community of banded criminals disintegrated with a touch of grace, we were profoundly scandalised with each other.' (Conrad J: Op.Cit. closing paragraphs.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

- 1 Laing RD: The Politics of Experience Introduction.
- 2 Wilde O: De Profundis Methuen 1922 p.32.
- 3 Paine T: Rights of Man Watts 1944 p.34.
- 4 Eliot TS: 'The Idea of a Christian Society' in Selected Prose Penguin 1953 p.241.

Gissing's speculation regarding the impact of literature on the society of late Victorian England poses much the same question (Gissing G: The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft Dent 1964 p.45):

'But what if man presently finds himself without spiritual needs? Such modification of his being cannot be deemed impossible; many signs of our life today seem to point to it.'

- 5 Jung CG: Modern Man in Search of a Soul RKP 1976 p.267.

It must be allowed here that Jung is very much a minority voice in 'social' criticism, a point brought home by the fact that by 1972 Rattray Taylor still has to urge the following:

'It is a mistake of sociologists and still more of economists to oversimplify man - [to] treat him as a complex machine which needs only to be fuelled, maintained and programmed to function satisfactorily.. His

psychic life can be polluted in ways we can hardly perceive, never mind understand.'

(Rattray Taylor G: Rethink: A Paraprimitive Solution Secker & Warburg 1972 p.256.)

Vonnegut preaches along similar necessarily evangelical lines in his future fantasy The Sirens of Titan:

'Everyone now knows how to find the meaning of life within himself.

But mankind wasn't always so lucky. Less than a century ago men and women did not have easy access to the puzzle boxes within them.

They could not name even one of the fifty-three portals to the soul.

Gimcrack religions were big business.

Mankind, ignorant of the truths that lie within every human being, looked outward - pushed ever outward.. Eventually it flung them into space.. into the colourless, tasteless, weightless sea of outwardness without end.

It flung them like stones.

These unhappy agents found what had already been found in abundance on Earth - a nightmare of meaninglessness without end..

Outwardness lost, at last, its imagined attractions. Only inwardness remained to be explored.

Only the human soul remained terra incognita. This was the beginning of goodness and wisdom.' (Vonnegut K: The Sirens of Titan Coronet 1973, opening paragraphs.)

- 6 Campbell J: The Hero with a Thousand Faces Abacus 1975 p.212.

Carlyle's rhetoric is interesting in this context:

'Not a May-game is this man's life: but a battle and a march, a warfare with principalities and powers. No idle promenade through fragrant orange-groves and green flowery spaces, waited on by the choral Muses and the rosy Hours: it is a stern pilgrimage through burning sandy solitudes, through regions of thick-ribbed ice. He walks among men.. but his soul dwells in solitude, in the uttermost parts of Creation. In green oases by the palm-tree wells, he rests a space; but anon he has to journey forward, escorted by the Terrors and the Splendours, the Archdemons and Archangels. All Heaven, all Pandemonium are his escort. The stars keen-glancing, from the Immensities, send tidings to him; the graves, silent with their dead, from the Eternities. Deep calls for him unto Deep.' (Carlyle T: Past and Present Chapman & Hall Book 4 Ch.7.)

- 7 Homer: The Odyssey Everyman 1935.

Ulysses progresses from fighting monsters of the Id to outwitting female adversaries in domestic dramas.

- 8 Thoreau HD: Walden Camelot 1886 p.105.

Burgess, too, in The Right to an Answer, takes up and expatiates on the complaint, with reference to post-war England:

'I'm telling this story mainly for my own benefit. I want to clarify in my own mind the nature of the mess that

so many people seem to be in nowadays. I lack the mental equipment and the training and the terminology to say whether the mess is social or religious or moral, but the mess is certainly there, certainly in England, and probably in the Celtic fringe and all over Europe and the Americas too. I'm in a position to smell the putridity of the mess more than those who have never really been expatriated from it - the good little people who, with their television, strikes, football pools and Daily Mirror, have everything they want except death - because I only spend about four months in England every two years now, and I get the sharp stench in my nostrils (widened by warm air) as soon as I land and for about six weeks after that. Then, gradually, the corruption creeps up, like fog round the boat-train, and, yawning over the television in the front room of my father's semi-detached, arriving at the pub sometimes five minutes before opening time, I can feel damnation being broken in like a pair of shoes, myself becoming a citizen of the mess..' (Burgess A: The Right to an Answer Hutchinson 1983 p.1.)

9 Hugo V: L'Homme Qui Rit Collins p.191.

This is reflected in the tone of many of CP Snow's novels, and especially in Powell's 'Music of Time' novel-sequence (see, for example, Powell A: Casanova's Chinese Restaurant Penguin 1975). A similar 'dead-souled' tone is to be found in Wesley's account, in his Journals, of unconverted sinners (Wesley J: Wesley's Journal Isbister & Co. 1902).

- 10 Baldwin J: The Devil Finds Work Michael Joseph 1975 pp.121-122.

A comparison profitable for the case for 'anti-courage' might be made with Henry James' dissertation on evil (James H: The Turn of the Screw Penguin 1981), inspired by an 'actual' sighting of the Fiend himself; and while goodness is treated in a rather foolish way in the character of Tom Pinch, Dickens' Jonas is a rivetting meditation on the nature of evil (Dickens C: Martin Chuzzlewit Penguin 1980). Possession, too, is treated penetratingly in the 'anti-courageous' literary Weltanschauung: most familiarly in Melville's character of Ahab (Melville H: Moby Dick Everyman); less familiarly in Balzac's Louis Lambert (Balzac HD: 'Louis Lambert' in Seraphita and other Stories).

- 11 Rycroft C: Psychoanalysis Observed Constable 1966 p.92, quoting Russell.

- 12 Burgess A: A Clockwork Orange Penguin 1981 pp.147-149.

- 13 Joyce J: Ulysses Bodley Head 1960 p.817.

14 Dreiser T: An American Tragedy Constable 1927 p.69.
Since this is one of the most common complaints of the
'courageous' outlook, another instance is deserved,
this time from Mauriac's The Desert of Love (Mauriac
F: The Desert of Love and The Enemy Eyre and
Spottiswoode 1949 pp.1-2):

'The young man sat down at one of the tables, thus breaking the immaculate vista of white cloths. A glance in a mirror showed him that he was not looking his best. "What's the matter with me?" he wondered. God! - how he hated a wasted evening - and all because of that swine Eddy H..... He had had to dig the fellow out and almost drag him to a restaurant. During dinner Eddy had scarcely listened to what he was saying, and had excused his inattention on the ground of a sick-headache.

He had sat perched on the very edge of his chair, impatience in every line of his body, obviously preoccupied with the thought of some happiness to come. No sooner had he finished his coffee than he had taken eagerly to his heels - eyes shining, ears flushed and nostrils flaring. Raymond had spent the day in delighted anticipation of their dinner and of the evening that was to follow it. But, no doubt, Eddy had in prospect pleasures more stimulating than any offered by a mere exchange of confidences.

Courreges was amazed to find that he felt not only disappointed and humiliated, but also sad. The discovery that the companionship of a friend to whom he attached no particular importance could show as thus precious to him, came as a shock. It was something entirely new

in his life. Up to the age of thirty, being quite incapable of the selflessness demanded by true friendship, and devoting much of his attention to women, he had disregarded everything that was not an object to be possessed, and, like a greedy child, would have said, had he put the feeling into words, "I like only what I can eat."

A female counterpart of Mauriac's Courreges may be found in debauchee Netta Longdon, in Hamilton's Hangover Square (Hamilton P: Hangover Square Penguin 1968).

- 15 Pavese C: Op.Cit. p.261.

The sort of creature the 'anti-courageous' is in danger of despising might, for instance, be Henry Adams' ironically-named Sybil:

'There was a simplicity about Sybil's way of dealing with life, which had its own charm. She never troubled herself about the impossible or the unthinkable. She had feelings, and was rather quick in her sympathies and sorrows, but she was equally quick in getting over them, and she expected other people to do likewise. ..Sybil particularly disliked this self-inspection..'

(Adams H: Democracy: An American Novel Airmont 1968 Ch.9 p.113.)

- 16 Walker K: Meaning and Purpose Pelican 1950 p.87.

Worth noting here is the fact that unorthodox 'spiritual' psychiatry is often in a position to

illuminate brilliantly the distinctions of orthodox theory. RD Laing's famous account of the difference between the 'neurotic' and the 'psychotic', in which the first thinks his mother is treating him badly and the second that his mother is not his mother at all, is shot through with the wit and insight that belies the philosopher with his head in the clouds. For this and other serious pasquinades see Laing RD: The Divided Self Pelican 1968.

- 17 Jarrell R: Pictures from an Institution Faber 1954 p.100.

It may be supposed that it is this attitude that lies behind the opprobrium heaped by some upon Huxley's meditation upon the sense of sight (Huxley A: The Art of Seeing Chatto 1943), in which the author's fascination with the mystical combines with an equal fascination with the biological to produce what is a unique comment on epistemology.

- 18 Gibbon E: Op.Cit. p.308.

The whole notion of the seriousness and import of the spiritual life is similarly undercut in Faust (Goethe: Faust, Part Two Penguin 1959), in which Mephistopheles is easily denied his soul and the world goes on as before.

19 Mann T: 'Tonio Kroger' in Stories and Episodes Everyman 1955 p.28.

Hesse's 'arch-outsider' (Hesse H: Steppenwolf Penguin 1978) is less sympathetic, certainly, than Mann's - see the account of the boarding-house in the early chapters of the novel. So too is Camus' (Camus A: The Outsider Heinemann 1977), who cares not at all for the 'human' race, far less be envious of it. Both, however, are in essentially the same situation as Tonio Kroger, even if their attitudes towards that situation differ. We must, of course, remember that literary 'outsiders' are not always in agony: Maugham's isolate-mystic (Maugham WS: The Razor's Edge Pan 1982) enjoys a Buddha-like contentment with his lot as an outsider. Upton Sinclair's autobiography of his youth (Sinclair U: American Outpost Kennikat 1969) gives an account of himself as enjoying a similar contentment. Interesting too in this connection is Sinclair Lewis' George Babbitt (Lewis S: Babbitt Cape 1960), who finds his agony in the very fact that he is so much an inveterate 'insider'. But, generally speaking, the accepted version of the outsider is either that of the sympathetic Tonio Kroger or the pathetic Steppenwolf, both versions being discussed with a myriad of other examples in Colin Wilson's

work on alienation (Wilson C: The Outsider Pan 1965). This work, although held presently in poor critical regard, is a valuable analysis of the 'outsider' phenomenon.

20 Mann T: Op.Cit. p.65.

Interesting, too, in this context is Priestley's final word on what we know as 'modern' literature:

'Literature itself now becomes one-sided, inevitably because it is over-introverted, often so deeply concerned with the most mysterious recesses of personality and so little concerned with the outside world. It now becomes a literature largely for specialists themselves nearly always equally introverted; and people in general, for whom it is really intended, find it either too "difficult" or "too neurotic" and unhealthy.' (Priestley JB: Literature and Western Man Heinemann 1960 p.443.)

21 Herlihy JL: The Sleep of Baby Filbertson Faber 1959 p.22.

Nabokov's Sebastian Knight (Nabokov V: The Real Life of Sebastian Knight Penguin 1968) might be seen as the sophisticated narcissistic counterpart to Herlihy's Rudy.

22 Hogg J: The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner Crescent 1947 p.119.

This 'disproportion' is just what the more egregious of the 'anti-courageous' find to praise in one another. Vide Maugham on Dorothy Parker:

'In a few short perfect lines she presents herself to you, to take or leave, with her pain, her laughter, her tenderness, her feeling for beauty, her ribaldry and her common sense. Now that I come to consider these affections and proclivities that I have ascribed to her, it occurs to me that we all, except bishops and elder statesmen, possess them; but she possesses them in a heightened, more concentrated form, so that when you read almost any one of her verses you seem to see her as through the wrong end of a perfectly focussed telescope.' (Maugham WS in Parker D: The Penguin Dorothy Parker Penguin 1977 p.603.)

- 23 Brown GD: The House with the Green Shutters Holmes McDougall 1974 p.150-151.

This recalls the critical-cum-moral judgement passed, inevitably, on Poe and Baudelaire. This is rarely the judgement passed on artists by other artists. Maugham's account of Gauguin, for example (Maugham WS: The Moon and Sixpence Pan 1981), sees that artist realising himself to a sublime degree while physically perishing of leprosy, his art the justification of his life and endeavours. Mann, too, in his account of musical genius (Mann T: Doctor Faustus Penguin 1978), sees Art, whatever excesses

it entails, as ultimately its own justification. To be fair, there are instances in which the artist displays a fear of his devouring artistic temperament (see, for example, Gautier T: The Beautiful Vampire Heinemann 1926), but these are the exception to the rule.

- 24 Twain M: A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court Doubleday p.135.

Ironical, or queerly logical, that Twain, simultaneously the mocker of Scott and an arch-romantic himself, evinced by the 'natural savage' philosophy with which his masterpiece is filled (Twain M: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Penguin 1977), should be the author of these sentiments.

- 25 Plato: Gorgias Penguin 1977 p.82.

Even when this kind of 'anti-courageous' wisdom does not render the individual entirely ineffectual, as with Hammett's and Chandler's hardboiled detectives Spade and Marlowe, it still relieves him of any role in life likely to provide ordinary satisfactions:

'The whole point.. is that the detective exists complete and entire and unchanged by anything that happens, that he is, as detective, outside the story and above it, and always will be. That is why he never gets the girl, never marries, never

really has any private life.. His moral and intellectual force is such that he gets nothing but his fee, for which he will if he can protect the innocent, guard the helpless and destroy the wicked, and the fact that he must do this while earning a meagre living in a corrupt world is what makes him stand out.' (Raymond Chandler in Macshane F: The Life of Raymond Chandler Cape 1976 p.70.)

- 26 Johnson S: Rasselas Oxford 1926 p.47.

The grand mechanism of Henry Adams' Education (Adams H: The Education of Henry Adams Airmont 1967), in which developments in the author's life are paralleled by the progress and reversals of his country, might be said to suffer from a similar 'canker'.

- 27 Aurelius M: The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Bell & Sons 1910 XIII 53.

- 28 Wilder T: The Woman of Andros Longman 1930 p.18.

There can be no doubt that the world of books is an unremittingly incestuous one. It is unusual, when reading literature, to proceed very far without encountering literary allusion. Thus the 'anti-courageous' literary acolyte may well be out of touch with 'real' life. Melville, famously 'book-haunted', is far from alone in this respect.

- 29 Swinburne AC: 'A Ballad of Francois Villon' in Selected Poems Macmillan 1950 pp.237-238.
Mailer's 'cult of violence' (see, for example, Mills H: Mailer: A Biography NEL 1982 pp.13-37 and passim) and Huysmans' aesthete (Huysmans JK: Against Nature Penguin 1978) represent aspects of this alternative morality which has other facets.
- 30 Shelley MW: Frankenstein Minster 1968 p.348-349.
This wrongful and absurd usurpation of the 'courageous' by the 'anti-courageous' world is perhaps also paralleled by Charles Williams' fantasy in which platonic ideal archetypes emerge from the shadow-world where Plato holds they exist to swallow up all their pale worldly reflections. (See Williams CL: The Place of the Lion, discussed very clearly in Green RL and Hooper W: CS Lewis: A Biography Collins 1974 Ch.5.)
- 31 Joyce J: Op.Cit. p.45.
- 32 Lewis CS: A Grief Observed Faber 1981 p.52.
Reid's moving and elegiac study of the life of Francis Thompson (Reid JC: Francis Thompson: Man and Poet Routledge 1959) is a perfect epitome and illustration of reality's 'iconoclasm'. De Quincy's

confessions, on the other hand, strike me as too glamorous an account of the disparity between real and ideal (De Quincy T: Confessions of an English Opium-Eater Camelot 1886).

33 Thoreau HD: Op.Cit. p.9.

34 More T: Utopia New Haven 1964 Book Two Ch.One

What some refer to as the strange case of HG Wells may illustrate this point. Beginning with The Invisible Man and The Time Machine, in which man at the risk of life and sanity attempts to explore what is sometimes referred to as the 'postcultural' universe (see discussion on Wells in Bellamy W: The Novels of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy 1890-1910 RKP 1971), Wells moved on to 'rewrite' world history in search of meaning (Wells HG: The Outline of History Macmillan 1920). The academic response to this was generally that Wells had written more history than he had read. Wells collapsed, his efforts to wrest meaning from the inchoate morass of life defeated, as documented in his Mind at the End of Its Tether (see discussion in Dickson L: HG Wells Macmillan 1969). Wells, then, if we accept the argument put forward in the text, is one of More's

rock-torn would-be Utopians.

An earlier parallel to Wells can be found in Heine. His preface to the second edition of De L'Allemagne Depuis Luther sees him regretfully disowning the idealism contained in that work:

'.. The book which lies before you is a fragment, and shall remain a fragment. To be candid, I would prefer to leave the book wholly unprinted; for.. my views.. have undergone a marked change, and much that I then asserted is now in opposition to my better convictions.. At that time I was yet well and hearty; I was in the zenith of my prime, and as arrogant as Nebuchadnezzar before his downfall. Alas! A few years later, a physical and spiritual change occurred. How often since have I mused over the history of that Babylonian king who thought himself a god, but who was miserably hurled from the summit of his self-conceit, and compelled to crawl on the earth like a beast.. and I recommend all.. self-worshippers to lay it devoutly to heart..' (Heine H: Preface to De L'Allemagne Depuis Luther reprinted in part in 'Religion and Philosophy' in Prose Writings of Heinrich Heine Camelot 1887 pp.142-143.)

Contrast the above with the 'anti-courageous' usurpation of significance and genius in his Reisebilder, Heine's early credo:

'It is everywhere agreed, Madame, that one should deliver a soliloquy before shooting himself. Most men, on such occasions, use Hamlet's "To be, or not to be". It is an excellent

passage, and I would gladly have
quoted it - but charity begins at
home, and when a man has written
tragedies himself.. it is very
natural that one should prefer his
own words even to Shakespeare's..''
(Heine H: Reisebilder Everyman Ch.2)

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